



# On The Wing

Volume 44 Number 4

Boulder County Audubon Society Newsletter

Sept-Oct 2014

## BCAS 4th - Tuesday Program Series

**Sept. 23: Dragonflies of the Colorado Front Range — Ann Cooper (7:15 pm.)**



*Twelve-spotted skimmer*

Photo by  
Ann Cooper

Dragonflies--they are dainty, but deadly, as they dart over ponds and clearings on the hunt for prey. How can they fail to catch the eye with such shimmering rainbow colors? Boulder County Audubon naturalist Ann Cooper will dazzle us with close-up images of some of our most colorful dragons and damsels and introduce us to their fascinating life histories.

After the program, she'll autograph copies of her new field guide, "Dragonflies of the Colorado Front Range."

Prior to Ann's program, Boulder County Audubon's Gerhard Assenmacher will present equally compelling images of some of our most beautiful birds and introduce us to BCAS's new online guide to more than 220 Boulder County species.

**Important → → For budgetary and environmental reasons,**

***On the Wing* will now be delivered by electronic media. Continued twice-yearly mailings by U.S. Post will be made to local BCAS members only, upon request.**

**Thanks for your understanding!**

**Oct. 28: A Season in Yellowstone —  
Peter Hartlove (7:15 p.m.)**

Join us for a fascinating program following Yellowstone National Park through spring, summer and fall. Peter Hartlove lived in the park for 9 months and spent many hours recording wildlife, landscapes, wildflowers and more. His professional presentation will allow us to join the changes in nature as we are awed by his photographs. Peter Hartlove has been a freelance photographer for over 20 years. His first photographs were of Rocky Mountain flowers from which he diversified to landscapes, wildlife and underwater photography. His images have been seen in *Ocean Realm*, *National Wildlife Magazine*, *Skin Diver*, *Audubon's Field Guide to Insects and Spiders*, *North America's Best Amateur Nature Photographers* and the *Coral Reef Calendar*. Even though he is beginning to experiment with digital photography, he is still capturing his images on slide transparencies, which requires the photographer to perfect exposure and composition in the field.



Yellowstone grizzly by Peter Hartlove

*Program Meetings at Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Boulder, 5001 Pennsylvania Ave.  
(west off 55th St. between Arapahoe & Baseline)*

**Autumn Colors at White Rocks — Saturday Oct. 4th**

8:00 – 11:30 am, limit: 15 people

67 million years ago, it was a river delta and beach at the edge of a shallow sea. Today we know it as White Rocks, one of the most unique places around Boulder. Local conservationist Ricky Weiser owned and protected this property for almost 40 years. Join City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks naturalist Dave Sutherland for an in-depth exploration of Ricky's legacy and the wildlife that use the adjacent riparian area. White Rocks is rich in local history and geological stories, and protects plants and animals of exceptional local rarity. Bring mosquito protection and binoculars. Contact Pam Piombino at: [piombino.pam@gmail.com](mailto:piombino.pam@gmail.com) to reserve your spot.

**Winged Wonders: Behind the Scenes at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science — Sunday November 2**

9:15 a.m. — 3:30 p.m., limit: 25 people

Boulder County Audubon Society has been invited to view the collections in two fascinating departments at the Museum. We will meet Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) experts David Bettman and Chris Grintner to explore the extensive arrays of these delightful insects. Ornithology Fellow Andrew Doll will then take the group to see the museum's bird collections, which include examples of the extinct Passenger Pigeon.

We will meet in the northeast corner of the East Boulder Recreation Center complex, 5660 Sioux Drive, to carpool to Denver. The program will start at 10:30 at the museum. Email: [Pam.piombino@gmail.com](mailto:Pam.piombino@gmail.com) to reserve a spot. Children over 15 welcome with parents or guardians. You will not be charged an admission fee. After the presentations, you'll have access to the entire museum excluding IMAX and any special displays.

**115<sup>th</sup> National Christmas Bird Count — Sunday Dec. 14**

The Boulder Circle of the CBC will hold its 73<sup>rd</sup> count on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> this year, which also happens to be the date of the Winter Solstice—traditionally the day when BCNA and BCAS hold their annual Solstice Hike, which brings these two important events into conflict this year.

Beginners are welcome to join teams on the CBC, following the leaders around and contributing their spotting skills, if not their identification skills. More experienced folks are urged to join and lead a small crew to cover an area within the circle. Anything can happen (both weather and wildlife) and it usually does. If you prefer, you can also stay at home and count at your feeder, while sipping mulled wine and munching toasties. Following a day in the field (for most of us), we celebrate together with a warm and jolly compilation supper; some provided and some potlucked. Please contact coordinator Bill Schmoker ([bill.schmoker@gmail.com](mailto:bill.schmoker@gmail.com)) to put your name on the "interested" list.

**Winter Solstice Celebration Hike — before dawn, Saturday Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>**

One of Audubon's most cherished chapter traditions is the annual Solstice Hike with Boulder County Nature Association. We gather at the White Rocks trailhead (on south side of Valmont east of 75<sup>th</sup> St.) and after greeting and meeting with many puffs of frosty air, we walk down to the creek crossing to view the sunrise, admire whatever winter is bringing our way, and share readings, poetry and a song or two. Warm up afterwards with breakfast in Niwot, so let Steve know if you are coming in order to warn the restaurant. Steve Jones: 303-494-2468.

**Boulder County Audubon Society****— Officers —**

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*Bill Schmoker (303-702-9589)*

Wildlife Inventory

*Alex and Gillian Brown (303-494-3042)*

Crossbill email account

*Petrea Mah (303-484-4121)*

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Boulder County Audubon Society*

**Next issue deadline:****(Nov 2014 issue) Oct. 17**

Contact editor via link at:

[www.boulderaudubon.org/newsletter.htm](http://www.boulderaudubon.org/newsletter.htm)

## Boulder County Audubon Environmental Awards 2013



### Paula Hansley: Lifetime Achievement Award

Paula Hansley has been carrying out bird studies and leading field trips in Boulder County and beyond for close to 50 years. She is one of Colorado's most accomplished ornithologists, with an ability to recognize birds by their songs and chips that is unsurpassed.

She began birding in the woods behind her Ohio home at the age of 5 or 6. After moving to Colorado to go to school, she joined the Boulder Bird Club in 1962. She completed one of the first North American breeding Bird survey plots in Colorado at Rocky Mountain National Park; then for 15 years she carried out a bird survey along Boulder Creek through campus. In 1980 she began a census of bird populations in Golden Gate Canyon State Park. Paula is one of the longest-serving participants in the Indian Peaks Four-season Bird Count, the only high elevation such count in North America. She has hiked and skied its montane areas since the inception of the study in 1981. Along with three other researchers, she has carried out monthly bird surveys within the Coal Creek riparian corridor

(south Boulder) for 16 years. She also surveyed blocks for both the first and second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas projects.

These various surveys have helped establish early data sets for Colorado, and continue to provide invaluable insights about characteristics and changes in Front Range and mountain bird populations.

As a field trip leader and communicator of information about birds, Paula is a wonder. She has taught ornithology classes for Boulder County Nature Association for 15 years. She's led dozens of field trips for Denver Audubon, Boulder County Audubon, Denver Field Ornithologists, Colorado Field Ornithologists, and the Boulder Bird Club, most of which fill up soon after being posted. *(continued on page 4)*

### Sue Cass: Environmental Conservation Champion

Sue Cass has been one of Boulder County's most respected environmental leaders for 30 years, having served on the Boulder County Nature Association board for more than 20 years, including two years as President. She has a unique ability to advocate unflinchingly for the environment while building consensus among diverse individuals and groups. She has needed all of these skills while serving on the County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee for nearly 8 years, helping to resolve disputes over genetically modified crops, fracking, wildlife conservation, and public lands management.



Steve Jones, Sue Cass, Ray Bridge  
(photo by Alan Cass)

Also for BCNA, she has organized and personally "catered" the annual Boulder County Ecosystem Symposium for the past 10 years, as well as chairing its publications committee, helping to produce several natural history guide books and pamphlets.

Sue's greatest strength is her ability to educate and motivate other volunteers. Since the late 1980s, she has trained and supervised volunteers for the Boulder County Wintering Raptor Survey, the longest-running raptor survey in the central Rocky Mountain region. We estimate she has trained several hundred volunteers for that project alone. As a County Volunteer Naturalist, she has worked with Jim McKee and other volunteers to conduct dozens of trainings and field trips.

Three years ago, she assumed leadership of the Boulder County burrowing owl survey; now nearly 60 volunteers participate in that monitoring effort.

*(continued on page 4)*



North county backyard tiger salamander — photo by Joe Farah of

[ReptilesOfColorado.com](http://ReptilesOfColorado.com)

**Sue Cass, cont. from page 3:**

Miraculously, during 2012, volunteers in this project completed 100% of the assigned monitoring (a total of 200 visits to their assigned prairie dog colonies)--a level of completion probably never before reached by any other Boulder County monitoring project.

BCAS recognizes and appreciates Sue's passion for the environment, her ability to separate fact from fiction, and her dedication to working with volunteers from diverse backgrounds and with diverse levels of environ-

**Paula Hansley, cont. from page 3:**

As a professional geologist, Paula has provided us all with an enhanced understanding of the links between physical processes, ecosystems, and wildlife populations along the Colorado Front Range. Her field trips and classes to locations along the Front Range and as far away as the Nebraska Sandhills have enriched our understanding of the wonders that surround us.

Many of us have learned much of what we know about birds from Paula. We've also grown to appreciate the importance of persistence, dedication, and a constantly inquisitive and questioning approach to natural history research and environmental conservation. We understand the world around us much better because of Paula's efforts, and we are better armed to protect our natural environment due to the wonders she has documented and the information she has shared with us all.



**Matt Claussen and Joy Master: Community Conservation Award**

For more than 15 years, City of Boulder conservation ecologists Matt Claussen and Joy Master have led the effort to protect and enhance habitat for native wildlife populations on Boulder Parks and Recreation Department lands. They've trained wildlife monitoring volunteers, developed visionary approaches to managing prairie dog populations, instituted aggressive weed management programs, and developed restoration and wildlife plans for several City of Boulder parks.

At Boulder Reservoir, whose wetlands and prairie dog colonies support several Boulder County breeding birds of special concern, including imperiled Northern Harriers and Burrowing Owls, Joy and Matt initiated a volunteer monitoring program in 2004. With the assistance of Boulder Parks and Recreation volunteer coordinator Mary Malley and Boulder County Audubon's Steve Jones, they have trained several dozen volunteers to monitor these nesting populations. Results of this nest monitoring have led to a much clearer understanding of the habitat needs of these species and contributed to efforts to protect and enhance their nesting habitat in the recently completed Boulder Reservoir Master Plan. Joy and Matt also have instituted wildlife closures throughout the wetlands on the west side of the reservoir and created attractive informational signage that educates the public about the critical role these wetlands play in local species conservation.

Throughout this process and the development of management plans for other City of Boulder parks, Joy and Matt have continually advocated for wildlife habitat and native species protection and enhancement. For their tireless advocacy for wildlife habitat conservation and their skill at developing collaborative partnerships with volunteers, environmental groups, and recreational groups, we are honored to present them with this year's Boulder County Audubon Community Conservation award.



Steve Jones, Petrea Mah, Joy Master; Matt Claussen absent—photo by Alan Cass

**In memoriam**

**Dr. Robert Cohen**, fondly nicknamed the Swallow Man, was the regional expert on Tree Swallows, conducting research on the migration habits of swallows, for more than 40 years while working for the Metropolitan State University of Denver, as well as after his retirement. He died in an auto accident on May 30<sup>th</sup> of this year, leaving wife Irit, still an assistant professor for the University, as well as a daughter.

Paula Hansley recalls meeting Dr. Cohen in Coal Creek Canyon, where he once told her that the Tree Swallow was his passion from the time he was a little boy. He built over 400 homes (nestboxes) for the birds, with the help of his students, and maintained them for years. They line the Peak-to-Peak highway from Nederland to Rollinsville and from Rollinsville to the Moffat Tunnel. More are on Arapahoe Ranch west of Nederland. You can see the avian descendants of his first birds—some Violet-green Swallows, some Mountain Bluebirds, and of course his Tree Swallows—whenever you pass the still inhabited houses that line these familiar roads.

Dr. Cohen wrote a monograph on the Tree Swallow and its life history. He made a video as well, which Paula still possesses.



*Tree swallow — Gerhard Assenmacher*

\* \* \* \* \*



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Boulder County Audubon  
on Facebook:**

<http://tiny.cc/ez7v6>

**A Home-Grown Birding Festival**

**in the Legendary Prairie Pothole Country**

*By Steve Jones, Boulder County Audubon*

I returned this June, after an eight-year hiatus, to the Potholes and Prairie Birding Festival in Carrington, North Dakota. If you don't mind seeing 30,000 nesting pelicans, dozens of Western and Clark's grebes sitting on their floating nests, and as many as 10 grassland-nesting sparrow species in a single day, you might consider this reasonably-priced and very friendly festival.

Highlights for me included an outdoor dinner and bluegrass concert, accompanied by singing willow flycatchers and orchard orioles, on the lush grounds of Pipestone Creek Bed and Breakfast; and a free-spirited boutique wine tasting at the artfully victorian Putnam House in downtown Carrington. I led a trip to the Missouri Coteau prairies, overlooking Chase Lake, where we saw the pelicans and grebes, along with blooming prairie turnips, white penstemons, Missouri and ground plum milk vetches, and nesting marbled godwits (and where I finally began to get a handle on those elusive Nelson's and Leconte's sparrows).

The friendly folks and extremely knowledgeable leaders at this festival make the whole experience quite special.

For information, visit:

[http://www.birdingdrives.com/Our\\_Festival.html](http://www.birdingdrives.com/Our_Festival.html)

**Cheyenne Bird-day Party**

**Coming up soon**

Following swiftly our own 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup> (see coverage in our e-edition), the Cheyenne—High-Plains Audubon Society is also celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> at the Laramie Community College. John Fitzpatrick of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will speak at the banquet, and there are multiple family activities associated with the event. All are invited: members free, others \$10 registration, \$14 for lunch, \$22 for the banquet on Saturday.

See <http://home.lonetree.com/audubon/> for the full schedule.

**Bird Crumbs — spring and summer tidbits** ~~~~~

Spring avian news included multiple reports of ovenbirds up and down the Front Range, with field ornithologists still eager to prove that they (the birds) are breeding here, and not just a bunch of lonely bachelors. Efforts to do this so far have been unsuccessful. Near to home, they've been heard for years in Fern Canyon, on Shanahan Ridge and other locations. Like optimistic gardeners, we always hope for better luck for these persistent males next year.

Ft. Collins Audubon member Nick Komar and companions were attempting a "Big Day" when a mountain lion crossed their path at close quarters. They also found three-toed woodpeckers in recent burn areas and... ovenbirds.



*Ovenbird in the snow — Bill Schmoker*

## Please remember BCAS on Colorado Gives Day

We have appreciated your support for our ongoing programs, some of which are described within these pages. You will find Colorado Gives to be an easy way to support our chapter and our programs.

Please mark your calendars now for December 14th (which is also Christmas Birdcount Day!)

Giving on that day gives all your Boulder County donations extra oomph:

You can donate using a credit card; we are entered in fund-boosting lotteries in several ways; and all our County non-profits benefit from the news and internet coverage.

Think of the last wonderful field trip you had with our knowledgeable leaders; or about our Tuesday chapter programs which help you explore the natural world outside your backyard; about the Shortgrass Prairie Ecosystem show that helps people understand what a keystone species is, and why these things are important; about our outreach to youth, the ones who will take up the effort to seek sustainability for Planet Earth.

*Thank you, and come to meet us outdoors!* [www.coloradogives.org/](http://www.coloradogives.org/)



## Wildlife Inventory, Oldest Non-stop Perennial Year-round Birdcount in the County

Informal reports were submitted as early as 1979, and the first data-supported reports began in that year, with Alex and Gillian Brown coordinating and collection. This has remained their second "job" for decades, with hundreds of contributing birdwatchers through the years. In recent years the Browns have been assisted by Kitty Brigham. **To see the records for mid-winter 2013/14, please go to our website [BoulderAudubon.org/](http://BoulderAudubon.org/): click on Wildlife Inventory. Also, see also page 9 in this edition of *On the Wing*.**

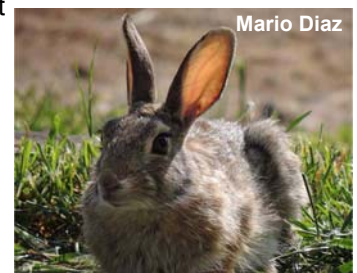
## Exploring Culture and Opportunities program at Boulder Ridge Mobile Home Park

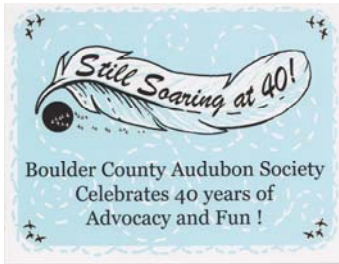
For a week in June, BCAS volunteers Steve Jones and Petrea Mah and other volunteers assisted ECO staff in combining natural history, energy and water conservation, as well as the arts in a program for minority adults and youth, mostly involving local trailer home communities.



More than 30 Latino youth from 5th to 11th grade participated in the program, along with their younger siblings. Adults attended workshops on ways to save money through energy and water conservation, including information on free and discounted programs available to low-income families in the County. Students came from several mobile home parks, as well as low-income housing in Lafayette. The natural history components of the program included a bioblitz: a transformational experience for many of the youth who learned, for the first time, about the birds, mammals, insects, butterflies, and insects in their neighborhood. They were able to compare those that live in their community versus those that inhabit the Open Space along Coal Creek. They learned a bit of nature

photography (see page 10 in our online edition), recorded nature sounds, and created visual art from the images of the plants, insects, butterflies, birds, and animals identified in their explorations. With the volunteers' help, the students created a slide show of nature photos accompanied by nature sounds and music, along with wall art of the flora and fauna they discovered (see also p. 7). BCAS as well as National Audubon and the Toyota Together Green fund helped to sponsor the program. (see page 10 for more)





## Taking wing: Boulder County Audubon Turns 40

For fond memories of our 40<sup>th</sup> birthday party, please see our Facebook page <http://tiny.cc/ez7v6>

## Celebrating 50 years of Wilderness

State photographic tour sponsored by

Sierra Club, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers

and others who care about wild lands and wild things

Over the past year many state and national environmental organizations have collaborated with John Fielder, Colorado's best-known wilderness photographer, to present a photographic celebration of the Wilderness Act, which is in its 50<sup>th</sup> year (enacted 1964). The initial acreage preserved as wilderness was 9.1 million acres. The bill was signed by L.B. Johnson. In the intervening years, 100 million acres have been added.

(For excellent articles on the status of wilderness advocacy in the lyrical prose of Craig Childs and John Hart, see the July 21<sup>st</sup> edition of *High Country News*).

## John Fielder's Boulder Presentation

**On Sept. 9, jointly hosted by the Sierra Club and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder, Mr. Fielder will make the only Boulder presentation,** sharing glorious images of Colorado and other states, with music and stories of life on the trail during his 40 years of exploring the wilderness. The event, at 5001 Pennsylvania Avenue in Boulder, will be followed by book sales and signing at 8:30 pm and will include a reception with cash bar. Tickets are free.

This will not be the sole opportunity to view the presentation however. **On Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> at the Dickens Opera House in Longmont the show will be repeated,** with Wildlands Restoration Volunteers benefiting from ticket and refreshment sales. This event is expected to sell out, so please be sure to reserve tickets at the WLRV website ([wlrv.brownpapertickets.com](http://wlrv.brownpapertickets.com)). Those interested in participating in the Fielder-judged photo contest can find details at [wlrv.org/photocontest.html](http://wlrv.org/photocontest.html).



Wall art by the ECO students: see page 6. For photos by some of the students, see page 10 of OTW online.

## Shortgrass Prairie Ecosystem Show

Designed in 2007 to enhance the science curriculum for 3rd graders, and to provide classroom enrichment for ages 8 to 10, the Puppet Show is often offered through other venues.

Now 7 years old, Maureen Lawry's Prairie Ecosystem show has been presented over 87 times. Petey the tireless Prairie Dog has performed at the Denver Zoo, the CU Museum, libraries in the greater Denver region, churches, the Prairie Conservation Center, Telluride, the Pine Ridge and Lower Brule reservations, and Bryce National Park. Petey is a frequent guest of Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks. The little show has traveled across Colorado from end to end; and it is asked to return every year to the Badlands National Park for special presentations where it is linked with the Black-footed Ferret Festival (a celebration of the ferret's ongoing reintroduction).

Nearly 3000 audience members have absorbed the ecosystem messages. One of the most popular characters is the "bad guy coyote (who is "bad" only from the prairie dog's perspective), but the most beloved is Petey, the young prairie dog character.

Critical reviews from past spectators (no spellings changed):

Kindergartner to the puppeteers, when they appeared to the audience after the show: "Where did you go? You missed the show -- it was so good!"

"Prairie dogs are small and very Koot. The show was cool. thanks! thanks!"

"I didn't know Prairie Dogs wore hats."

"I changed my mind about the preyre dog, becos I thot it was a pest."

"I was surprised that they are smart and intelligunt. they have their own language. It is amazing! You know how they have operation wolf. they should have operation prairie dog."

"I learned how if in animal gets extinct everything gets effected."

"The show was dazling, I think you should tape the hawk to the stick so it doesn't fall."



## Northern Harriers Fledge Five Young in Boulder County

For the first time in 10 years, wildlife monitors observed two successful Northern Harrier nests in Boulder County this spring and early summer. A nest in the Little Dry Creek wetland just west of Boulder Reservoir fledged 2 young on 25 June. Harriers nested at this site in 2004 and 2006-9, fledging a total of 10 young, but the site was inactive during 2010-13.

While monitoring the Little Dry Creek harriers, volunteers saw the male chasing coyotes, red-tailed hawks, and even an American bittern away from the nest, located on the ground amid acres of cattails. We all breathed a sigh of relief when two young finally emerged from the marsh, though at least one nestling didn't make it.

A previously undocumented nesting territory, in wetlands on open space property near Saint Vrain Creek and south of Hygiene Road, fledged 3 young. Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks biologist Will Keeley saw the young harriers soaring with their parents in late June.

From 2004-14, we've documented a total of 16 northern harrier nesting attempts in Boulder County, with 6 successful nests fledging a total of 22 young. While this rate of nesting success is probably not sufficiently high to maintain stable nesting populations in Boulder County, this year's success of two nesting pairs at least gives us cause for hope.

Thanks to the more than 30 volunteers and agency biologists who submitted nest monitoring reports in May and June: Sharon Anderson, Linda Andes-Georges, Pat Bohin, Emily Burley, Leigh DiNatale, Carol Dozier, Katie Hartrick, Kay Hartrick, Will Keeley, Chuck Klomp, Liz Litkowski, Joy Master, Doyle McClure, Mary Malley, Nancy Ries, Morrison, Kitty Noonan, Christian Nunes, Sabine Painter, Linda Palmer, Mark Ponsor, Sue Ponsor, Janine Pow, Gary Rabourn, Gretchen Ridgeway, Peter Ridgeway, George Roxborough, Anna Swarts, Patrick Schappe, William and Kate Steffes, John Wold. way, Peter Ridgeway, George Roxborough, Anna Swarts, Patrick Schappe, William and Kate Steffes, John Wold.



Breeding season fame for this Northern Harrier —  
Photo by Claudia Van Wie



Boreal Bluet pair —  
Ann Cooper

### Local author with new book on Dragonflies in our Region

*Dragonflies of the Colorado Front Range*, by Ann Cooper, is now available at the Wild Bird Center Boulder store and will soon be distributed to several dozen bookstores and other stores up and down the Front Range. Thanks to all of you who supported this effort. It's a beautiful and very informative book, and the format is identical to *Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range*, which has already sold nearly 2000 copies in the Denver-Boulder County area.

Cooper, Ann. 2014. *Dragonflies of the Colorado Front Range*. 112 pages with 102 color photos. Boulder County Nature Association, Boulder CO. \$12.95

Note: Boulder County Nature Association supporting members (\$40 a year or higher) and life members receive complimentary copies of all our publications. Contact the BCNA

membership chair, Cindy Maynard ([cmaynardre@gmail.com](mailto:cmaynardre@gmail.com)), for directions on how to receive your copy.



## BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, JANUARY - MARCH 2014

Gillian and Alex Brown, 4560 Darley Avenue, Boulder, CO 80305

January is always a challenge for those birders who keep annual lists, as they look for birds in a month that usually has few surprises. However, two species that were missed in 2013 did put in an appearance. **Glaucous Gull** is a very large pale gull that can easily be identified. One was seen on Boulder Reservoir, almost exactly two years since the last one was reported. **Snow Bunting** is not an easy bird to predict where and when it might be seen. This January (for us) bird was seen in grasslands to the east of Boulder; the last one was seen in January 2012. We did have some unseasonal sightings of which the most unusual was an **Ovenbird** frequenting a backyard in Longmont. Unfortunately, it could not survive the cold temperatures of a Colorado winter and subsequently expired. Another unseasonal sighting was a **Gray Catbird**. Unusual birds that continued to winter in Boulder County included the **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, which was back for the fifth consecutive year. A **Tundra Swan** continued to be seen both at Walden Ponds and Valmont Reservoir. **Long-tailed Duck** and **Barrow's Goldeneye** were good diving duck sightings. Gulls were reported in their thousands with **Ring-billed Gull** being the dominant species, followed by **Herring Gull**, with the occasional **California Gull**, **Thayer's Gull** and **Lesser Black-backed Gull** mixed in. **Long-eared Owl** is always an exciting sighting. Altogether 97 bird species were reported in January with several expected species not reported.

February is usually one of the slowest months of the year for birders, but there were signs of the coming spring for those who looked for them. The first **Cinnamon Teal** of the year was seen on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first **Mountain Bluebird** on the 26<sup>th</sup>. These are typically the first two migrants to return, and the ones that are often seen as early as February. Large raptors and owls are typically on nest in February. The most unusual sighting of the month was a **Rusty Blackbird** at Walden Ponds. The Indian Peaks Winter Bird Count increased the number of montane species seen with **Northern Goshawk**, **Gray Jay**, **American Three-toed Woodpecker**, **Golden-crowned Kinglet**, **Brewer's Blackbird**, all three species of **Rosy Finch**, **Pine Grosbeak** and **Evening Grosbeak** being observed. However, the Indian Peaks had a record low number of species recorded for a winter count, although the number of individuals was slightly higher than normal due to the good pine crop. An **American Pipit** east of Longmont was an unusual February sighting. A sapsucker was observed in Louisville. Although this was not fully identified as to species, it is likely (both by the sound it made and by the time of year) to have been a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** rather than our more normal breeding **Red-naped Sapsucker**. 92 bird species were reported in February, again a rather poor total with several expected species missing.

March is truly the beginning of spring with many returning migrants making their first appearance of the year. By the end of March shorebirds such as **Greater Yellowlegs** and **Long-billed Dowitcher** were beginning to appear, and **Killdeer** were suddenly everywhere. A **Band-tailed Pigeon** seen in the mountains on the 1<sup>st</sup> seems early for this species. **Say's Phoebe** is not an unusual sighting in March, but this year **Eastern Phoebe** was also reported. **Eastern Phoebe** has become much more common in Boulder County in the last few years, and is almost certainly breeding here. Other expected arrivals included **Blue-winged Teal**, **Turkey Vulture**, **Osprey**, **Franklin's Gull**, **Mourning Dove**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, **Common Grackle** and **Great-tailed Grackle**. Other good sightings for the month were **Virginia Rail**, **Northern Pygmy Owl** and **Short-eared Owl**. A total of 107 bird species were reported in March.

### CONTRIBUTORS TO THE JANUARY -MARCH INVENTORIES

Margaret App, Jon Barfield, J. D. Birchmeier, Boulder Bird Club, Eric Boysen, Kat Bradley-Bennett, John Breitsch, Kitty Brigham, Alex & Gillian Brown, Peter Burke, Al Clark, Todd Deininger, Tony Delaney, David Dowell, Norman Ertl, Ted Floyd, Peter Gent, Barry Gingrich, Paula Hansley, Susan Harris, Peter Hartlove, Chuck Hundertmark, Indian Peaks Winter Bird Count, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Loch Kilpatrick, Elena Klaver, John Kuhar, Chuck Lowrie, Petrea Mah, Kathy Mihm-Dunning, Mark Miller, Steve Miodinow, Lynn Monroe, Nick Moore, Sharon Norfleet, Christian Nunes, Carol Ortenzio, Laura Osborn, Beth Partin, Dick Pautsch, Pam Piombino, Bill Prather, Ira Sanders, Bill Schmoker, Scott Severs, Bob Shade, Janet Smith, Carl Starace, Marcel Such, David Suddjian, John Taylor, Cheryl Teuton, John Vanderpoel, David J Waltman, Tom Wilberding, Wild Bird Center.

*Unusual owl rendered perfectly by Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art student*



Boulder Reservoir photo used by permission of Parks & Recreation Dept.



### City Parks & Recreation considers activities and habitat management at Boulder Reservoir

As part of an ongoing examination of Reservoir management, the City of Boulder will begin another round of public comment on the next stage of recreation and wildlife habitat planning, focusing on types of human activity, location of those activities, and how to make everyone happy. Just kidding.

We do not yet know the details of the draft plan that will soon emerge from public “scoping” last spring. Several of our Board members took part. However we hope Audubon members will pay close attention to what types of activities are allowed in high-quality habitat (like what’s left of the marshes on the east end of the Reservoir, where harriers are hanging on by a thread; see page 9; or like the promising bittern/heron areas near Coot Lake).

A “trail” through or in proximity to those marshes may doom our chances to have any more harriers in Boulder County. This is the Alamo, so to speak. Please attend meetings, look carefully at maps and proposals, and send your comments to the leaders of the management refinement plan.

Meanwhile, include the Reservoir and Coot Lake in your weekly wandering, and look for short-eared owls to return to the north side of the Reservoir, if there is not too much noise at the model plan facility nearby.



Northern harrier meditates on whether to move the household.. Photo by Mark Ponsor.



Coot Lake marshland view in fall — courtesy of David Mendosa

### Pin-ups page

#### Collage from the ECO youth group (see also page 6)



Mushroom cluster — by Mario Diaz



Participant shares excitement with other watchers.



Day-camper sights something intriguing.



Mom robin is spotted by camera of Aristeo Rice



Neighborhood flowers — Asthi Adhikari

### Eagle Protections Alert

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be revising rules regulating the "take" (killing) of Golden and Bald eagles associated with wind power, including the 2013 decision to extend take permits from 5 to 30 years.

The National Audubon Society and AVAS have opposed this 30 year extension as inconsistent with sound eagle population management.

The USFWS will host meetings around the country to obtain public input which will be used to revise the regulations. The Colorado meeting was held in July but you can send comments to the USFWS at:

<http://eaglescoping.org>

**Deadline for comments is 9/22/14.**

### Rescue Success Stories



A crew of orphaned Cliff Swallows are learning how to be big birds at Colorado Native Bird Care & Conservation.



Rescued from a busy parking lot with a broken wing, Chachi the Chickadee spent 5 weeks recovering before he could be released

### Another Bird in Trouble: Write to Protect Gunnison Sage Grouse Habitat

Like its big cousin, *Centrocercus minimus* is a ground-dwelling bird requiring large expanses of sagebrush, along with a diversity of grasses and forbs, and healthy wetland and riparian ecosystems. Last year U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing this bird as endangered, which predicates designating critical habitat for the species. The BLM has determined that the preparation of an EIS is necessary (in accordance with NEPA). The BLM will seek public and agency input to identify issues to address in the document. Encourage the BLM to address habitat protection without the knee-jerk predator control ("let's kill coyotes and ravens") that some are recommending. Send helpful comments to Ms. Leigh Espy at: [gusg\\_amend@blm.gov](mailto:gusg_amend@blm.gov).

Quick facts page:

[http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM\\_Programs/wildlife/sage-grouse/GUSG.htm](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Programs/wildlife/sage-grouse/GUSG.htm)

### The Secret Lives of Birds:

#### Programs at the IMAXX, Denver Museum

A series of programs will be presented by Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory with the Denver Museum of Science and Art (location: the Phipps IMAXX Theater) in September and October; tickets \$15 for non-members.

Programs are:

Sept. 11, Birds of Paradise: <http://www.dmns.org/learn/adults/after-hours/the-beautiful-world-of-the-birds-of-paradise/>

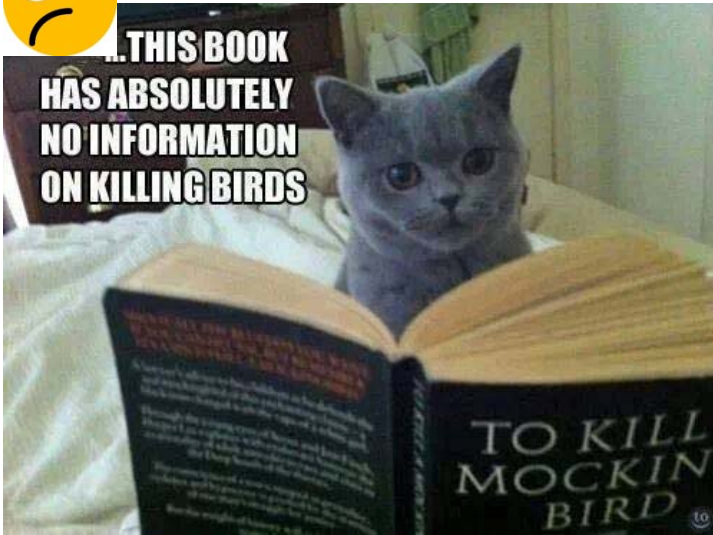
The birds-of-paradise are a living laboratory of natural selection. The way the males gracefully use their stunningly colorful feathers to attract a mate is just one of their extraordinary wonders. Ornithologist Edwin Scholes and National Geographic photographer Tim Laman took 18 expeditions to New Guinea, Australia, and nearby islands to capture images of all 39 species of the birds-of-paradise. Scholes will use photographs and video to recount his wild and hairy adventures in the rain forest and explore the fascinating scientific questions about how these dazzling creatures have evolved. Following the program, pick up a copy of the gorgeous book *Birds of Paradise: Revealing the World's Most Extraordinary Birds* and enjoy a reception with coffee and cookies.

Oct. 21: Bird Sounds: From the Beautiful to the Bizarre (<http://www.dmns.org/learn/adults/after-hours/bird-sounds-from-the-beautiful-to-the-bizarre/> )

Nov. 5: Passenger Pigeon: <http://www.dmns.org/learn/adults/after-hours/the-passenger-pigeons-flight-to-extinction/>



**Wildlife reminder !**



Please keep domestic friends indoors. Being outside is not good for them—or for our wild friends, feathered, scaled or furred.



**See 40th Celebration photos**  
**On separate links on our website:**  
**BoulderCountyAudubon.org**  
**or on our Facebook page:**  
**<http://tiny.cc/ez7v6>**

**Inaugural Film Festival**

**Produced by Boulder Rights of Nature**

*Oct. 17th at Dairy Ctr for Performing Arts*

Beginning on October 17, Boulder Rights of Nature (and associated supporting groups) is proud to present a unique selection of nature-related films over a period of three days.

Boulder County Nature Assoc. as well as BCAS will have a link to the schedule of events on their respective websites.

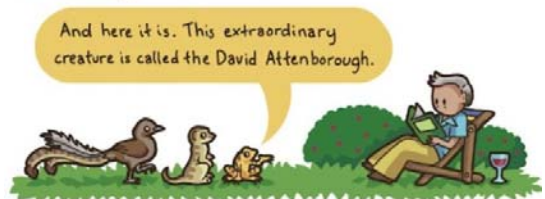
Tickets are \$12 for each (\$8 for students), with \$42 for the full session of films (\$30 students). A festival supporter package is available for \$100: it includes preferred seating, pre-festival wine reception entrée, and choice of tshirt or local field guide.

The series is dedicated to legendary North American documentary filmmaker Les Blank, who showed us the beauty, courage, and creativity of traditional peoples in their natural settings.

Some authors and producers will be present for certain showings and discussions.

Attenborough

birdandmoon.com



Used by permission of cartoonist Rosemary Mosco

American avocet parent & chick—with permission R. Wolfe, Flickr

**Become a Supporting Member of Boulder County Audubon**

We receive very little return from National Audubon dues, and have to rely primarily on local funding to support Boulder County Audubon activities and programs.



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Life membership: \$300 \_\_\_\_\_

→ Options for receiving *On the Wing* (check one):

Paperless (provide email)  Paper (local members only)

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