



# On The Wing

Volume 40, Number 4

Boulder County Audubon Society Newsletter

Sept-Oct 2010

## Species of Concern-a-thon Raises nearly \$2200 for Boulder County Audubon Programs

Participants in this year's species of concern-a-thon saw dozens of baby burrowing owls near Barr Lake, spied a rare green heron at Walden Ponds, watched male bobolinks displaying in tallgrass meadows near South Boulder Creek, heard and saw territorial flammulated owls in Coulson Gulch, and watched a family of five bald eagles on their nest in a field west of Brighton.

Thank you all for your enthusiastic participation and your generous contributions on behalf of locally threatened and endangered species.

*Bald Eagle:* Janet Hanley, Carol and Dave Kampert, Carol McCasland, Dorothy Phinney.

*Bitterns and Herons:* Dave and Elaine Hill, George and Petrea Mah.

*Bobolink:* Linda Andes-Georges, Cheryl Orwig, Pam Piombino, Ian Remga.

*Burrowing Owl:* Chris and Deb Abrahamson, Cynthia Kroll, Kevin Kroll, Kristin Marshall, Carol McCasland, Iris Sherman-Boemmker, Dona Dye Stever, Jim Stever, Jan Toniazzo, Tom and Patsy from Texas.

*Flammulated Owl:* Pat Billig, Sean Burns, Jaïrd des Raïsmes, Dave and Peg Fletcher, Rachel Homer, Steve Jones, Rita Klees, Sandra Laursen, Maureen Lawry, Dona Dye Stever, Jim Stever.

Some participants made donations that greatly exceeded the recommended pledge amounts, and we are particularly touched by your generosity. Thank you Dave and Elaine Hill, Dave and Carol Kampert, and Carol McCasland.

Kristen Marshall donated \$500 in memory of her parents, who taught her how to listen to the land and appreciate the quiet joys of nature and rural life.

Because of the generosity of all of you, we were able to fully fund this year's Boulder County Audubon conservation and education programs while initiating a new scholarship fund enabling local teenagers to attend Audubon summer birdbanding camps.

[See the nesting status update on page 6.]



## BCAS 4th Tuesday Programs



Elk Bull with harem at Coal Creek—Steve Jones

September 28, 7:30 p.m.

## Riparian Renaissance at Coal Creek

Steve Jones, Linda Andes-Georges, and Paula Hansley

In 1998 Boulder County Audubon approached Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks about fencing (to exclude cattle) and protecting a relatively natural stretch of Coal Creek south of Boulder. Aided by a generous grant from the Terra Foundation, the city was able to complete fencing of 5 miles of the creek corridor in December 1999. We initiated bird monitoring within the corridor in 1998 and have carried out monthly bird counts since then. These counts have documented a threefold increase in numbers of native cavity-nesting and tree canopy-nesting birds. Elk have returned to the riparian corridor for the first time in 150 years, and a bald eagle pair has nested successfully. Boulder County Audubon financed production of a DVD, by John Vanderpoel, that chronicles some of these changes.

Steve Jones, Linda Andes-Georges, and Paula Hansley are local naturalists who have initiated and participated in a variety of bird studies, including the Indian Peaks Four-Season Bird Counts, the Boulder County Nature Association wintering raptor and small owl surveys, and the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas.

More Programs, pages 6 and 7

**Socializing: 7 p.m., Program: 7:30**  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder, 5001  
Pennsylvania Ave. (west off 55th St. between  
Arapahoe and Baseline)  
(No more refreshments, new carpet)

## Field Trips

**Saturday, September 11, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Walking tour of Arapaho Ranch. Lee and Virginia Evans' ranch west of Nederland contains some of the best-preserved willow cars, montane meadows, and aspen groves in Boulder County. For years their ranch has been a focal point of Boulder County Nature Association research and restoration activities, and Lee and Virginia have contributed generously to BCNA land conservation projects. This leisurely hike and picnic lunch by Middle Boulder Creek will offer the opportunity to get to know this beautiful landscape, which is protected by a conservation easement with Colorado Open Lands. Limited to 15 participants. To reserve a space, contact Steve Jones (curlwsj@comcast.net; 303-494-2468)

**Sunday, Sept 26, 6:00 p.m.** Roll and Stroll birdwatching with BCAS and OSMP at Boulder Valley Ranch open space. Audubon birders will team up with Topher Downham, an OSMP specialist, to provide this bird-watching experience at dusk for people who use walkers, wheelchairs, canes, or just regular legs. Bring hats, water, assistance if necessary, and binoculars if you have them, though some will be available to share. Extra wheelchairs available for assistance or just to experience. Contact Mary Balzer for more info: marybalzer@qwest.net. Meet at Boulder Valley Ranch Trailhead parking lot (Longhorn Rd off 36, north of Boulder).

**Saturday, October 9, 2010 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Walking Tour of Carolyn Holmberg Preserve and a visit to the Birds of Prey Center at Rock Creek Farm. Beginning at Stearns Lake parking area we will explore Stearns Lake and look for early migrating water fowl. We will follow the Mary Miller (the mother of Lafayette) Trail to Rock Creek Farm for a guided tour of the Birds of Prey Center. As we return to Stearns for a potluck picnic lunch. We will keep our eyes open for raptors and especially a bald eagle pair that wintered in the area south of the lake last year. For those who have time we can take the Cradleboard Trail to the northern boundary of a wetland preserve to notice if wetland and short grass prairie ecosystems can coexist with development. Limited to 20 participants. To reserve a space, contact Petrea Mah at petreamah@comcast.net or 303-494-4121.



One of the *Treasures of the Boulder Mountain Park* that Dave Sutherland may discuss in his program on October 26.

See page 6.

White Adder's-mouth Orchid.  
Photo courtesy University of Colorado Herbarium.

### Boulder County Audubon Society

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To contact the editor, use the link in  
[www.boulderaudubon.org/newsletter.htm](http://www.boulderaudubon.org/newsletter.htm)

**Next issue deadline: (Nov 2010 issue) Oct 15.**

## West Trail Study Area (WTSA) Update

The Community Collaborative Group (CCG) has now begun considering specific proposals for each sub-area of the WTSA. Proposals are solicited before each meeting and then considered by the whole group. The goal of each meeting is to reach tentative consensus on each issue. Below are listed the main proposals for each sub area already studied.

The link to a table of tentative agreements given in the printed version of OTW was out of date by press time. Click below for a more durable Web link.  
<http://tinyurl.com/24rvnuh>

### North Sub-area including Red Rocks/ Sanitas

1. Goat Trail access from Linden & 4th St. – Designate one trail on eastern corridor, close and restore western undesignated trail. Fix fence, add bike parking and create connection to Juniper.
2. West side of Mt. Sanitas (Wittemyer) - Construct new perimeter trail and close undesignated trails. Retain neighborhood access but allow no access at far north edge. No bike or dog access. No off trail use until success of trail closures can be determined.
3. Sanitas - Fix / reroute trail, clean up trails near summit and restore historical views by thinning. Provide access to quarries 2, 3, and 4 from the Sanitas Valley Trail and close and restore undesignated trail from East Ridge. Designate parallel undesignated trail on Dakota Ridge. Designate one loop for Sanitas Stone Shelter access, close and restore the other undesignated trails.
4. Anemone – Staff to define a loop trail using the ridge and the slope on the south side of Sunshine Canyon. Keep some of the viewpoints. Close and restore the undesignated trails from private property and Boulder Canyon.
5. Red Rocks - Designate an access from the Knollwood neighborhood to Settlers Park. A subgroup has determined important destinations for the Red Rocks trail system and staff will design the trail system.

### West Sub-area including North of Flagstaff Road and the Habitat Conservation Area

#### ◆ Proposals with tentative agreement:

1. Green Mountain West Ridge reroute - move away from road to improve sustainability.
2. Restore and maintain historic views from Amphitheater, close social trails leading to other viewing points.

#### ◆ Proposals with no agreement:

1. Use Chapman Dr as a bi-directional, multi-use trail connecting Boulder Canyon and Realization Point.

2. Reroute Flagstaff Trail to eliminate some road crossing starting at Gregory Canyon.

3. Long Canyon/EM Greenman/Saddle Rock/Green Mountain West Ridge/Ranger Trails

— Dead end Long Canyon to reduce traffic

— Create a loop with Long Canyon/E.M. Greenman/Saddle Rock/Green Mountain West Ridge and close Ranger Trail.

— New trail from South Boulder Peak trail (halfway between saddle and summit) to Walker Ranch.

Proposals and discussions about bikes in the WTSA will be handled as system wide issue rather than for each sub-area. Final decisions about changes in dog access will also be decided on a system wide basis. The meeting for these discussions will be on October 12<sup>th</sup>.

Below are the upcoming meetings of the CCG with sub-areas that will be discussed at each of those meetings. It is very important that public input be heard by the CCG. Those of you who are ecostewards or are “on the ground” in each of these areas have knowledge and understanding that is extremely valuable.

**Flatirons Sub-area including Chautauqua/Flatirons**  
September 1, 5:30-9:30

**Collaborative Proposals for Mountain Biking (entire West TSA)** September 13, 5:30-9:30

**South Sub-area including Shanahan / South Mesa**  
September 28 and October 12, 5:30-9:30

**Negotiate West TSA-wide Package of Proposals**  
October 26, 5:30-9:30

All meetings are held at OSMP Offices at 66 South Cherryvale.

The main goals of conservation caucus are to preserve/restore habitat in large blocks such as the Wittemyer property west of Sanitas and the Habitat Conservation Area, to maintain trails with unique ecosystems such as Long Canyon, Towhee and South Boulder Creeks for quiet users who focus on nature and to maintain biodiversity by protecting riparian corridors and rare plant communities. The Conservation Caucus would appreciate your feedback on these goals.

Contact Petrea Mah at [petreamah@comcast.net](mailto:petreamah@comcast.net) for more information. For a complete listing of the CCG representatives and their contact information click on the box below or paste the link in your browser.

<http://tinyurl.com/29plrms>



On the Wing enhancements include color and live links to many references. Watch for explicit URLs, colored-outline boxes, or tool-tips when you move the mouse over a few images.

## BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, NOVEMBER and DECEMBER 2009

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

December 2009 was a notable month for viewing gulls with nine different species reported. The rarest of these was a **Glaucous-winged Gull**, a species last seen in 2006. The gulls moved around a lot and it was hard to estimate exactly how many were really resident in the county. For instance, a **Glaucous Gull** and a **Great Black-backed Gull** were each reported on both Valmont and Erie Reservoirs, but it was unclear whether these were the same or different birds. By November there were reasonable numbers of diving ducks including some unusual species such as **Surf Scoter**, **White-winged Scoter** and **Long-tailed Duck**. A **Barrow's Goldeneye** seen on Valmont Reservoir in early December was a first sighting for the year. A **Red-throated Loon** seen on Union Reservoir in early November was the first time this species had been reported for a couple of years.

The Boulder Christmas Bird Count (BCBC) always produces good coverage of the bird species present. **Mandarin Duck** was a new species to add to the inventory, even though it is classified as an exotic and as such does not contribute to our county list. The only other new species added for the year on the Christmas Count was **White-winged Crossbill**. All three bluebird species, **Eastern**, **Western** and **Mountain Bluebird**, were reported on the Christmas Count. **Rusty Blackbird** was another good sighting although not the first for the year. A **Barn Owl** was an unusual count-week sighting, and seven **Long-eared Owls** made a nice addition for this hard to see species. Missing species that might have been expected included **Rough-legged Hawk** and **Evening Grosbeak**. Both these species have been hard to find in recent years.

Other new species seen in November and December were **Tundra Swan**, **Chihuahuan Ravens** (several sightings of this species which was last reported in 2007), and one or possibly two **Palm Warblers** (also last seen in 2007). Highly unusual for late December was a **Williamson's Sapsucker** in Lyons. Other out-of-season species included an **Osprey** in November, a **Gray Catbird** in early December and both **Clay-colored Sparrow** and **Lincoln's Sparrow** in November. Several **Winter Wrens** were reported, one of which was thought to be of the Pacific-type. This is a species that may well get split taxonomically in the near future.

Altogether 108 bird species were reported in November and 125 species in December. This is a record high for December equalling that of December 2002. For a full listing of sighted species go to [www.boulderaudubon.org/inventory.htm](http://www.boulderaudubon.org/inventory.htm)

### CONTRIBUTORS TO THE NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2009 INVENTORY

Alan Bell, JD Birchmeier, Mike Blatchley, Julia Bond, Alex & Gillian Brown, Curt Brown, Dave Cameron, Mark Chavez, Eric De Fonso, Todd Deininger, Ted Floyd, Steve Frye, Peter Gent, Dave Gillam, Bryan Guarente, Paula Hansley, Frank and Nancy Hatch, Chuck Hundertmark, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Douglas Kibbe, Joanie Kleypas, Nick Kormar, Chishun Kwong, S Cecile Lee, Mark Miller, Gene and Lynn Monroe, Christian Nunes, Laura Osborn, Deb Palenile, Beth Partin, Tracy Pheniger, Nathan Pieplow, Peter Plage, Suzi Plooster, Joe Roller, Peter Ruprecht, Ira Sanders, Bill Schmoker, Scott Severs, Bob Spencer, Marcel Such, Joel Such, Wendy Sydow, Walter Szeliga, Joyce Takamine, Glenn Walbeck, , David J. Waltman, Tony Wilk, Wild Bird Center, Bob Zilly.

### Global-warming Winners

A previous article in OTW<sup>1</sup> described the risks to pika populations from global warming. However, yellow-bellied marmots that share much of the same environment have been benefitting from warming.<sup>2</sup> A long-term data set (1976-2008) reveals that marmots are emerging earlier from hibernation, weaning their young earlier, and growing larger before they return to hibernation. As a result, there has been reduced adult mortality, a larger number of little yellow-bellies each year, and an abrupt increase in population.

1. *On the Wing*, Jan. 2007, p5
2. Arpat Ozgul, et al., *Nature* **466**, 482-485 (22 July 2010)



*Yellow-bellied marmot—G. Oetzel*

### 2009: An Overview of the Boulder County Wildlife Inventory

The total of 310 bird species recorded in 2009 was only two less than in our record year, 2008, and made this the second highest year in our records. This brings us to the fourth year in a row with over three hundred species; some of this must be due to improvements in technology but some is probably also be due to the increased numbers of birders looking for rare species. The only new bird for the wildlife inventory in 2009 was a Mandarin Duck found on the Christmas Bird Count, which as an exotic does not contribute to the county list. This year's sightings of Black Phoebe, Cassin's Sparrow and McCown's Longspur were each only the second report for the inventory since it started in 1979. Red-headed Woodpecker used to breed in the county, but two sightings in 2007 after an absence of five years and two further sightings in 2009 gives some hope for this species in Boulder County. Bohemian Waxwing was not reported in 2009; this irruptive species had been reported in the thousands during the spring of 2008. Otherwise, there were no obviously missing common birds from our list in 2009. The recent trend of poor reporting of mammals, reptiles and amphibians continued with only 28 mammalian, 8 reptilian and 3 amphibian species reported.

**Reported in 2009 but not in 2008**

- Red-throated Loon
- White-winged Scoter
- Chukar
- Upland Sandpiper
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Black Phoebe
- Eastern Phoebe
- Great-crested Flycatcher
- Cassin's Kingbird
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
- Chihuahuan Raven
- Gray-cheeked Thrush
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler

- Palm Warbler
- Kentucky Warbler
- Dickcissel
- Cassin's Sparrow
- Sage Sparrow
- McCown's Longspur
- Common Redpoll

**Reported in 2008 but not in 2009**

- Brown Pelican
- Northern Bobwhite
- Hudsonian Godwit
- Dunlin
- Ruff
- Red Phalarope
- Long-tailed Jaeger
- Iceland Gull

- Slaty-backed Gull
- Gray Flycatcher
- Ash-throated Flycatcher
- Carolina Wren
- Bewick's Wren
- Sedge Wren
- Bohemian Waxwing
- White-eyed Vireo
- Yellow-throated Vireo
- Philadelphia Vireo
- Black-throated Blue Warbler
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Prairie Warbler
- Mourning Warbler
- Summer Tanager
- Black-throated Sparrow

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
January	90	96	89	98	103	108	122	99	101	99	101
February	97	86	91	89	95	106	112	98	96	90	89
March	120	96	97	115	100	116	105	118	98	112	96
April	137	134	155	170	150	136	159	154	147	179	164
May	221	199	203	243	211	214	201	218	170	236	215
June	164	164	153	159	155	168	161	147	164	177	172
July	150	153	132	173	113	147	137	152	153	166	171
August	139	166	125	177	111	144	152	156	151	152	129
September	165	178	146	172	145	175	154	166	164	171	164
October	118	139	124	149	102	107	141	126	126	119	130
November	101	114	118	112	113	111	105	125	121	111	108
December	114	116	118	125	115	122	123	121	123	117	125
<b>Year Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>310</b>



Ken Ross took this picture on July 25 in the Rosses' front yard at about 8000 ft. in the foothills. In his 69 years of living here, Ken had never seen a cardinal in CO. Linda Ross was raised in Iowa where cardinals are abundant and has always enjoyed watching and listening to them. After 43 years in CO, she was shocked when this beautiful red bird showed up right outside the kitchen window. He was there off and on all day on the 26th, but not seen after that.

— Many thanks to the Rosses for the story and the unique picture with both a Cardinal and Steller's Jay. (In color at [www.boulderaudubon.org](http://www.boulderaudubon.org).)

## Species of Concern Nesting Update

This year's species of concern-a-thon participants received an update on nesting status of various birds of special concern. Here are a few highlights:

*Northern Harrier* (rare and declining): A pair of northern harriers nested successfully in the wetlands west of Boulder Reservoir for the second consecutive year, fledging three young. One of the young died a couple of weeks after fledging when it flew into a support cable for a power pole. A second nest west of Lagerman Reservoir failed in mid-June.

*Bald Eagle* (isolated and restricted): Three of Boulder County's five bald eagle pairs nested successfully, fledging at least five young.

*Green Heron* (isolated and restricted): Three fledglings were observed at Walden Ponds in July.

*Flammulated Owl* (isolated and restricted): This appears to have been a banner year for these little owls, with more than a dozen nesting territories reported in the Boulder Mountain Park and the Big Elk Meadows-Johnny Park area west of Lyons.

*Long-eared Owl* (rare and declining): A pair nested successfully in a park in Louisville, fledging at least three young. At least one other site may have been active this summer.

*Burrowing Owl* (isolated and restricted): A half-dozen pairs nested in Boulder County this summer. We are still compiling data on numbers of fledglings.

*Lewis's Woodpecker* (rare and declining): Two pairs apparently nested at Heil Ranch. This is very good news, since we had received no breeding reports since 2003.

We've received no nesting reports for the following rare and declining species: northern bobwhite, eared grebe, red-headed woodpecker, loggerhead shrike, brown thrasher, lark bunting.

If you have information concerning nesting activities of these or other Boulder County birds of special concern, please let us know. The complete list of species of concern can be found at the Boulder County Nature Association website: [www.bcna.org](http://www.bcna.org).

And we hope to see y'all on a species of concern fundraising trip next spring.

Steve Jones ([curlwsj@comcast.net](mailto:curlwsj@comcast.net))

### Help! Electronic Database Guru Needed

After more than 30 years of tedious monthly data entry by hand, we are ready to convert the Boulder Audubon Monthly Wildlife Inventory to electronic data entry. If you have experience with Access or other database programs, we could really use your help in setting this up. Please contact Steve Jones ([curlwsj@comcast.net](mailto:curlwsj@comcast.net)).

## BCAS 4th Tuesday Programs

### Tuesday, October 26

#### Treasures of the Boulder Mountain Park

Dave Sutherland, Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks

The Boulder Mountain Park and neighboring open space support a dozen species of wild orchid, rare ferns and mosses, nesting goshawks and flammulated owls, and perhaps the largest concentration of foraging black bears found anywhere in eastern Colorado. Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks naturalist Dave Sutherland will open our eyes to these and other wonders through his beautiful photos and years of experience exploring and teaching about Mountain Park ecosystems.

Dave Sutherland has been an interpretive naturalist for Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks for more than 10 years. Previously, he worked for 5 years as an interpretive naturalist for the Darwin Research Center in the Galapagos Islands. Using his bilingual skills and experience as a professional guide, he has taught nature classes and conducted workshops in Honduras, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Colorado.

#### Boulder Audubon on Facebook



Yes, we have a Facebook page!

Watch for an announcement about a Boulder Mountain Parks field trip to follow Dave Sutherland's talk.

Of course, events will continue to be announced on the Web at [www.boulderaudubon.org](http://www.boulderaudubon.org) and on Nature-Net.

### Tuesday, November 23

#### 30 Years of Raptor Research in Boulder

Rick Hatfield, Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks

Rick has been monitoring nesting eagles, falcons, and other raptors in the Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks system for nearly three decades, and he helped establish one of the most successful raptor nest-monitoring programs in North America. He'll update us on nesting behaviors and nesting success of these charismatic raptors.

**Holiday Sale 6:15 p.m., Program 7:30 p.m.**

We'll have a good selection of books and art works from local authors and artists, along with other holiday delights, with a percentage of the proceeds going to benefit Boulder County Audubon Society.

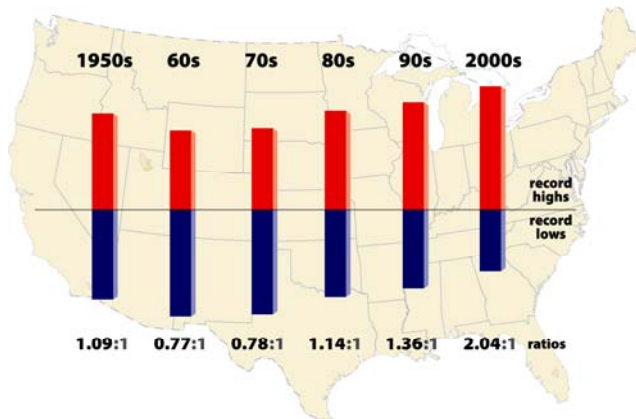
## Global Warming: Summer 2010 View

Disastrous weather events have been very much in the news this summer:

- Unprecedented heat in Russia, accompanied by disastrous fires;
- 15 inches of rain in 48 hours causing a dam failure and flooding in Iowa;
- Historic monsoon rains produce widespread flooding in Pakistan;
- A 100 square mile ice island breaks away from a glacier in Greenland.

Are these events related to global warming? Scientists are quick to say that the relationship can't be proved, but the pattern agrees with predictions. This sounds like a politically correct way to say, "I told you so."

An interesting indication of warming in the U.S. has been generated by NCAR scientists in Boulder in collaboration with other organizations. In an unchanging climate, one would expect that the number of daily record-high and record-low temperatures experienced over a decade would be about equal. They examined records from 1800 weather stations that have been operating since 1950 and found that in the early years the two figures were nearly equal. More recently, however, record highs are about twice as common as record lows.



**Ratio of number of record highs to record lows recorded at 1800 U.S. stations for the past six decades.\***

Computer models indicate that if we continue "business as usual" the ratio will be about 20:1 by mid century.

### References:

\* <http://www2.ucar.edu/news/record-high-temperatures-far-outpace-record-lows-across-us>

*Long, hot summer of fire, floods fits predictions*, Assoc Press, August 13, 2010

*In Weather Chaos, a Case for Global Warming*, N.Y Times, August 14, 2010

## Grocery Certificates

We are no longer able to mail grocery certificates. Certificates will still be available at the monthly meetings. BCAS receives a 5% donation from the sale of King Soopers certificates and 10% from sale of Liquormart certificates. Bring your checkbook to the meeting. Denominations:

King Soopers, \$100; Liquormart, \$25

## Special Programs

### Tuesday, October 5, 7 p.m., "Ghost Bird" film— Lafayette Public Library

Every year another bird species vanishes forever. What are the chances of one coming back? Boulder County Nature Association and Boulder County Audubon are proud to cosponsor this free screening of the much acclaimed documentary chronicling the search for the ivory-billed woodpecker.

"A multi-layered story that will fascinate practically everybody." - *New York Times*

Lafayette Public Library is located at 775 W. Baseline Rd. Please join us for the film and a short discussion afterward.

### Thursday, October 21, 7 p.m.

### "Life in the Pearl of Africa," with Robert Andrews

Boulder Reynolds Branch Library

Robert Andrews, co-author with Robert Righter of *Birds of Colorado*, has recently returned from 13 years teaching biology and ecology in Namibia and Uganda. His program will focus on natural wonders and cultural richness, including stories about his experience teaching ecology at a local university. Expect vibrant photos of wildlife as well as unique villages and parks.

This Boulder County Nature Association special program is free and open to all. The Reynolds Branch Library is located on Table Mesa Drive one block west of Broadway and opposite the Table Mesa King Soopers.

**Wild Bird Center** 303-442-1322



"Your backyard  
birding specialists"

[www.wbcboulder.com](http://www.wbcboulder.com)

On 28th south of Canyon  
In Boulder since 1989  
M-F 10-6, Sat 9-6, Sun 11-5

## Tracking an Invasion\*

### FeederWatchers track the spread of Eurasian Collared-Doves

Biological introductions and invasions are placed among the top five causes for declines in global biodiversity, but how introduced species affect native communities usually goes largely undocumented until long after a species has become established. One of the most recent exotic birds to arrive in North America, the Eurasian Collared-Dove was released in the Bahamas in the mid-1970s, was first documented breeding in Florida in 1982, and since about 2000 has spread rapidly across the continent. How has its presence affected other doves?

In a 2009 paper in *Ecography*, three scientists at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology analyzed Project FeederWatch data collected at 444 feeding stations in Florida from 1999 through 2008, examining habitat characteristics of sites preferred by collared-doves. FeederWatch project director David Bonter and Cornell Lab scientists Benjamin Zuckerberg and Janis Dickinson also examined the relationship between collared-dove abundance and the abundance of four other species of doves found in Florida.

The Eurasian Collared-Dove is associated with developed habitats throughout Europe and Asia, and this pattern holds in America. David Bonter said, "Human activity creates environments that are preferred by these nonnative doves." Collared-doves are also known to be aggressive and behaviorally dominant over similar species, and so the research focused on how the growing population of Eurasian Collared-Doves was affecting Florida populations of Mourning Doves, Common Ground-Doves, White-winged Doves, and Rock Pigeons. David said, "So far, the new invaders do not appear to be negatively influencing the numbers of native doves that we see in the winter. But this study focuses on Florida, a sub-tropical environment. It will be interesting to see how collared-doves interact with the natives in more temperate environments."

The range of Eurasian Collared-Doves is expanding rapidly. David said, "FeederWatchers in Alaska reported them in the past few months. The species has spread from the Southeast to Alaska in about 10 years. That track is remarkable, and far faster than any of the esti-

mates for the speed of invasion by House Sparrows or starlings in the 1800s."

As they increase, will collared-doves start invading wilder areas? In Spain, where they became established in recent years, the species first colonized developed areas and then expanded into the surrounding rural landscape. Will this pattern hold true in North America? Thanks to the increasing contributions of participants in citizen-science projects, scientists will continue to track the expansion of collared-doves and the effects on other species. Their insights may suggest ways to manage the landscape to minimize problems.

\* Laura Erickson, in *Birdscope*, newsletter of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Spring 2010.

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### Project FeederWatch for 2010-11

Data recording for the 2010-11 season begins in November. The cost is \$15, or \$12 for members of the Cornell Lab. Click on the logo to go to the FeederWatch website.



Eurasian Collared Dove — Bill Schmoker

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