



# On The Wing

Volume 34, Number 1

Boulder County Audubon Society Newsletter

January 2004

## President's Message

Remember the Brant that was at Dodd Reservoir a few years back (along with several hundred of its closest Canada Geese friends)? Remember the parking hassles, traffic threats to your life, and angry neighbors you endured just trying to set up your scope? Well, all that's going to change with the construction of a new public parking area on the Boulder County Audubon Society Sanctuary property adjacent to Dodd Reservoir.

Some of you old-timers may remember the Boulder Audubon Sanctuary at Dodd as "that place we used to go to pull those darned Canada thistles." Boulder Audubon acquired the property as a gift in the 1970's and has never had the resources to use it in a meaningful way. Dodd Reservoir is located near the intersection of Niwot Rd. and N. 73rd St. The BCAS property, approximately 10 acres, is along the western shore.

Boulder County Parks and Open Space has purchased the property around and the water rights to Dodd Reservoir and approached the BCAS board about providing minimal facilities to enhance watchable wildlife experiences at the reservoir on the BCAS property. They plan to build a small (five car) parking lot, an interpretive kiosk recognizing the historic Dodd Family and BCAS, and, eventually, a viewing blind. This plan is modeled on a similar lot the County has on the north side of Little Gaynor Lake.

The BCAS board believes this partnership with Boulder County Parks and Open Space and the resulting development will provide the best use of the Sanctuary for BCAS members and the public at large. Now we'll have a place to set up our scopes!

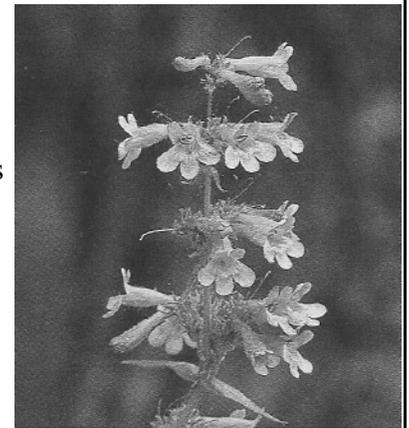
Sincerely,

Barb Beall  
BCAS President

## BCAS 4th Tuesday Program Series

### Jan. 27- Waterwise Wildlife Gardening—Jim Knopf

Jim is Mr. Xeriscape of Boulder. He is the author or two well-known books on xeriscape gardening and is the co-author with Steve Jones and Ruth Carol Cushman of *The Boulder County Nature Almanac*. His programs are informative and witty.



### Future Programs:

Feb. 24 - Birds of the Ponderosa Forests - Heather Swanson

Mar. 23 - Front Range Weather, Storms, and Soaring Birds - Bill Ecklund

April 27 - Rediscovering the North American Prairie - Steve Jones

Meetings are held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder, 5001 Pennsylvania Ave. (off 55th St. between Arapahoe and Baseline). Speakers and presentation ideas welcomed.

## Air Regulations Work

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) delivered to Congress in September 2003 its report on the costs and benefits of 107 major Federal regulations over the past ten years. A major conclusion is that the benefits of investing in pollution-control equipment far outweigh their costs. This is a notable contrast to the Administration's view that environmental regulations are to be eviscerated or repealed for the benefit of the economy.

From the executive summary: "OMB reviewed 107 major Federal rulemakings finalized over the previous ten years (October 1, 1992 to September 30, 2002). The estimated total annual quantified benefits of these rules range from \$146 billion to \$230 billion, while the estimated total annual quantified costs range from \$36 billion to \$42 billion. The majority of the quantified benefits are attributable to a handful of clean-air rules issued by EPA pursuant to the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act."

The full 234-page report is available in PDF format (2.5 MB) at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/infocreg/2003\\_cost-ben\\_final\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/infocreg/2003_cost-ben_final_rpt.pdf)



Thanks Susie Mottashed for the Screech Owl with its tufts down, and also for the Red-tailed Hawk on page 4.

"We have a screech owl right now at ICU at the Birds of Prey. He is such a sweetie!! So, I was inspired by him! Also, I have been seeing quite a few red tails on my hikes along South Boulder Creek Trail. They peer from up above with such magnificence to us humans down below."

## Boulder County Audubon Society 2004

### Officers

President **Barbara Beall** (303)665-6044  
Recording Secretary **Beverly Baker** (303)666-1972  
Treasurer **Curtis Williams** (303)494-5071

### Standing Committees

Membership Chairs **Bob & Gail Turner** (303)499-1579  
Newsletter Editors **George & Marti Oetzel** (303)543-3712  
Conservation/Legislation Chair **Linda Tipton** (303)823-0926  
Programs **New chair needed**  
Field Trips **Wes Sears** (303)499-4751  
Education Chair **Jessica Feld** (303)447-1313 ([feld@bvsd.k12.co.us](mailto:feld@bvsd.k12.co.us))  
Bird-A-Thon Team Coordinator **Bill Kaempfer** (303)443-3175

### Board of Directors

**Linda Tipton** (303)823-0926  
**Bob Turner** (303)499-1579  
**Scott Severs** (303)541-0784  
**Tom Van Zandt (Emeritus)** (303)443-9418

*On The Wing* E-mail: [nature@birdhike.com](mailto:nature@birdhike.com)

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BCAS on the Web: <http://www.boulderaudubon.org>

## Store Certificate Fundraising

Last year, July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003, Boulder County Audubon Society income from the sale of King Soopers, Safeway, Wild Oats and Liquor Mart certificates was just shy of \$2,000. Thanks to those who support this program.

This year, let's try to raise \$3,000 by June 30th. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3.

1. If you're not currently using store certificates, begin today. Give us a call, 303-499-4751, and we'll deliver.
2. Bring your check book to meetings and buy enough to last a month or more. Some of our members buy several hundred to one thousand dollars worth at a time. It means they don't run out for a longer period of time, and we don't have to make reminder calls as frequently.
3. Encourage your friends to shop with store certificates.

Thanks,

Wes and Bev Sears

**BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, JUNE - JULY 2003****Gillian and Alex Brown, 4560 Darley Avenue, Boulder, CO 80305.**E-mail [gillianbro@yahoo.com](mailto:gillianbro@yahoo.com)

**The Boulder County wildlife inventory needs help!** Although the summer months following spring migration have always been a slow time for birders, this year we received so few reports that it was an embarrassment. We are receiving reports of rarities through COBIRDS; it is the every day sightings that are pitifully under reported, and some areas of the county are not represented at all. The wildlife inventory has detailed records from 1979 of the birds seen in Boulder County, and a few records from an earlier date. We need to know whether the wildlife inventory is still of value to birders. Please show this by either sending us your reports, or letting us know your opinions. Otherwise we feel that the inventory should be discontinued. The complete listings for each month are available on the Audubon website at [www.boulderaudubon.org/inventory.html](http://www.boulderaudubon.org/inventory.html).

June 2003 was cooler and wetter than average, while July 2003 was super hot, with fifteen consecutive days over 90 F. Probably the hot weather contributed to the lack of July reports from the plains; only three species of duck were reported and no **Killdeer** at all. However, it did not explain why we got very few reports from the mountains, although the foothills were well covered. The Indian Peaks breeding bird count (IP) ensured that mountain birds were well reported in June.

This was a good year for hummingbirds. By mid-July hummingbirds were beginning to migrate. A female **Magnificent Hummingbird** was found in the high country. **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** were seen both in the mountains and out on the plains. We are now beginning to expect to see many **Calliope Hummingbirds** in July, and this year was no exception. Both **Broad-tailed** and **Rufous Hummingbirds** were seen in fair numbers, and again were found to be moving out on to the plains towards the end of July.

A nesting **Grace's Warbler** caused great excitement. This is a new species for the wildlife inventory, as well as a first breeding record. A **Hooded Warbler** heard in early July in Gregory Canyon is a possible indicator that this species has bred here again. An **Ovenbird** seen on the Indian Peaks bird count was a first sighting for the year. A **Red-eyed Vireo** was reported in July; this is a species that can easily be missed. Another easily missed species is **Grasshopper Sparrow**; they were reported as present in small numbers both months. **White-winged Doves** are definitely on the increase and we received reports of three separate sightings for the two months.

**Bald Eagles** continued to be seen throughout the summer. Hopefully this will be the beginning of a trend rather than an anomaly. **Ospreys** are increasing in numbers having successfully bred in several locations. A few **Peregrine Falcons** continue to attempt to breed. A **Sanderling** seen at the beginning of June was a late spring migrant. An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was seen on Rabbit Mountain in June; as far as I know there has been only one record of these birds breeding in the county. A **Boreal Owl** was heard near Brainard Lake, and a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** in Sunshine Canyon.

Altogether 155 bird species were reported in June which is lower than average. The 113 bird species reported for July is a record low count, and in no way reflects the true state of birds in the county. We would particularly like to thank those people from whom we did receive full reports.

**CONTRIBUTORS TO THE JUNE & JULY INVENTORIES**

Linda Andes-Georges, Alan Bell, David Bolton, Alex & Gillian Brown, Raymond E. Davis, Gene Ellis, Chuck Doolittle, Ann Dnyi, David Ely, Peter Gent, Jack Harlan, Ann Hicks, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Larry Modesitt, Gene & Lynn Monroe, Denny Morris, Sue A. Olmsted, George and Marti Oetzel, Andy Paulinos, Suzi and Myron Plooster, Richard Trinkner, John Tumasonis, David J. Waltman, Chris Wood, Eric Zorawowicz.

**AOU Changes Announced in 2003**

You'll have to learn all over again how to find birds in the field guide you buy in a couple of years, because the birds will be arranged in the new official taxonomic order. There are also a few name changes. For example, you may have heard that the Rock Dove has become the Rock Pigeon

From ABA a new list in 7 pages of large-print HTML: <http://www.americanbirding.org/checklist/chklst1.htm>

AOU lists 2031 species in 3 formats at <http://www.aou.org/aou/birdlist.html>

Most compact is the Excel version: <http://www.aou.org/aou/birdlist44.xls>

## BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2003

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

August and September 2003 continued the trend of the wildlife inventory receiving very few full reports - see the comments for June and July. Both August and September had record low numbers of bird species, with totals of 111 and 145 species respectively. Bad misses included **American Coot**, **Belted Kingfisher**, and **Townsend's Solitaire** in August, and **American Dipper** for both months. Many summer migrants that we would normally expect to be present in early September were never reported. This is our first use of the latest (44<sup>th</sup> supplement) American Ornithological Union (A.O.U.) Checklist. This mainly affects the taxonomical order of the birds, and has not created many changes in local species. Geese, ducks and grouse-like birds now precede loons and grebes. **Rock doves** are now called **Rock Pigeons**, and what was the **Three-toed Woodpecker** is now the **American Three-toed Woodpecker**.

August 2003 was wetter than average. This might have led one to expect a strong shorebird presence, but in fact shorebird migration seemed to continue with a steady trickle of birds throughout both August and September. **Baird's Sandpipers** were seen for the first time in 2003 during August; this is one of the shorebirds often seen more commonly in fall migration than in spring. In September we had fourteen **Red-necked Phalarope** reported and none of the more usual **Wilson's Phalarope**. **Red-necked Phalarope** is a bird that seems to be on the increase.

September 2003 was a fairly cool and dry month. It will be remembered for the influx of terns into the county. Bill Schmoker counted an amazing 86 **Common Terns** on Boulder Reservoir on September 13. Other observers saw **Common Terns** at three other locations on the same day. Bill also found an **Arctic Tern** on Boulder Reservoir; this was our first record for the county as all past inventory reports had been at Union Reservoir in Weld County. Another **Arctic Tern** was seen at Union Reservoir on the 13<sup>th</sup>, along with **Forster's**, **Common** and **Black Terns**. Gulls were also well reported with **Sabine's Gulls** at Little Gaynor Lake, Lagerman Reservoir and Union Reservoir. A **Bonaparte's Gull** was also seen at Little Gaynor.

The number of hummingbirds was beginning to decline by late August, but we had four hummingbird species reported both months: **Black-chinned**, **Calliope**, **Broad-tailed** and **Rufous**. **Gray Flycatcher** and **Cassin's Kingbird** are two of our less usual flycatchers that were reported for the first time this year. Other first sightings for the year included **Townsend's Warbler**, **Cassin's Vireo** and **Blue-headed Vireo**. **Townsend's Warbler** is habitually seen in the fall rather than the spring. The two vireos were formerly both designated as **Solitary Vireo**, but were split into separate species in 2000. Our breeding "**Solitary Vireo**" became the **Plumbeous Vireo**.

**CONTRIBUTORS TO THE AUGUST & SEPTEMBER INVENTORIES**

Linda Andes-Georges, Alex & Gillian Brown, Ted Floyd, Peter Gent, Bryan Guarente, Paula Hansley, Jack Harlan, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Tony Leukering, Carron Meaney, Gene & Lynn Monroe, Sue A. Olmsted, Beth Partin, Suzi and Myron Plooster, Scott Severs, Bob Spencer, Bill Schmoker, Oakleigh Thorne, Richard Trinkner, John Tumasonis, David J. Waltman, Chris Wood, Eric Zorawowicz.

**BCNA Raptor Ecology Class**

Steve Jones and Randy Gietzen

Improve your raptor identification skills while observing wintering eagles, hawks, and falcons on the plains of Boulder County. We expect to see golden and bald eagles; red-tailed, ferruginous, and rough-legged hawks; northern harriers; and American kestrels. Class discussions will focus on raptor behavior, habitat use, and conservation.

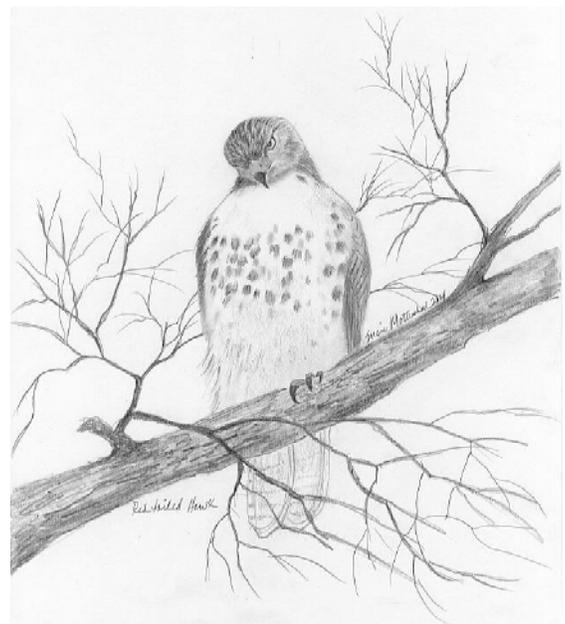
Thurs. Feb. 5, 7 to 9 p.m., indoor class

Sat. Feb. 7 &amp; Sat. Feb 21, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., field classes

Cost: \$70 (\$60 for BCNA members). Limited to 15 participants

To register: Call Steve at 303-494-2468 or email

Stephen.jones@earthlink.net



## BCAS RAPTOR FIELDTRIP – 2003 November 1

Leaders: Alex and Gillian Brown

A cool sunny morning in early November did not look very promising for a raptor field trip but eleven participants set out hopefully. Our plan was to drive northward from Scott Carpenter Park visiting a likely set of places that would at least guarantee a good range of birds even if the raptors did not cooperate.

First stop was N 63<sup>rd</sup> Street next to Valmont power plant – four **Golden Eagles** and a **Red-tailed Hawk** started the morning well with excellent views through the scopes. Four duck species plus Wilson's Snipe added to the scene. A brief stop at Walden Ponds (Cottonwood Marsh) added a soaring **Cooper's Hawk** and a perched **American Kestrel**. With a guaranteed duck spectacle ahead we next visited Little Gaynor Lake, north of Niwot on Oxford Rd, where a vast array of ducks was viewed in perfect light. Eleven ducks (Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck) plus a single Eared Grebe and many American Coot were available for detailed study. A hunting **Northern Harrier** added to our list.

Driving through Niwot and north on N 75<sup>th</sup> Street gave us good views of a magnificent **Ferruginous Hawk** and further Red-tails and Kestrels. Lagerman Reservoir produced one of the highlights of the trip when a beautiful adult **Bald Eagle** circled over us barely 20 feet above our heads. The area east and north of Table Mountain provided several more Ferruginous and Red-tailed Hawks allowing study of the range of possible plumages. An immature Golden Eagle on N 51<sup>st</sup> Street had some of us confused for a moment or two. McCaslin Lake on N 59<sup>th</sup> Street provided excellent view of our only **Rough-legged Hawk** plus an unexpected sighting of two Double-crested Cormorants. Our final area was Dowe Flats leading to Rabbit Mountain where a **Merlin** finished off our morning well.

62<sup>nd</sup> Boulder Christmas Bird Count

Bill Schmoker, Boulder CBC compiler

The 62nd Boulder Christmas Bird Count was conducted on December 14. Over 100 participants ventured out in very windy yet mild conditions to turn up 107 species on count day and an additional 5 species during the count week (fantastic numbers!). Three species are new to the count this year: Sharp-tailed Grouse (re-introduced in the Marshal Mesa area in 2002), Mew Gull (count week at Valmont Reservoir), and Band-tailed Pigeon (found in Sunshine Canyon by one of our hardy mountain territory teams.)

Cold weather leading up to the count day froze most still water in the count circle, but the remaining open water was quite productive. 4 Trumpeter Swans wintering at Lake Valley were especially nice. The wastewater treatment plant-warmed section of Boulder Creek east of 75th Street turned up some good birds, too, including a Greater Yellowlegs, American Pipits, and a Rusty Blackbird. Winter Wrens turned up along this stretch and at Walden Ponds. The steamy Valmont Reservoir complex also had a count-day Thayer's Gull and 3 count-week Lesser Black-backed Gulls along with hard-to-find water birds lingering in its unique environment.

Other highlights include 10 Harlan's Red-tailed Hawks (should be one of the top counts nation-wide), a Brown Thrasher (in the S. Mesa Trail territory), a Green-tailed Towhee visiting a feeder near Baseline Ave. & 76th St., and two count-week Savannah Sparrows found in the S. Boulder Creek territory. 7 Great-tailed Grackles at the Teller Farms Feedlot marked only their second count-day appearance, but as their numbers grow locally they should be more and more regular.

The great outcome of the Boulder CBC stems directly from the quality of all of its participants. Thanks especially go to the territory leaders for their efforts — with 30 teams afield, the success of the count rests on their shoulders. Congratulations to everyone for a great count. Make sure not to miss next year's CBC (and invite a new friend along!)

Boulder County Audubon Society

*On The Wing*

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[www.boulder-audubon.org](http://www.boulder-audubon.org)

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**Program Jan 27**

Waterwise Wildlife Gardening  
Jim Knopf  
Boulder's "Mr. Xeriscape"

*Field Trips & Events*

*Winter 2004*

Feb. 21 - Saturday. "Wings over the Platte" with Fern Ford. Part of the Platte north of Denver stays open all year. An amazing number of ducks can be found up close and active. The colder the weather the more ducks. Meet at Scott Carpenter parking lot at 8:30 a.m. Back about 1:00. For information, call Fern at 303-449-0118.

Mar. 13 - Saturday. "Spring Welcoming Walk at Sawhill Ponds" with Steve Jones. Steve is organizing his annual breakfast hike at Sawhill Ponds. Bring something tropical, sunny, delicious, or passionate to share at a potluck breakfast by Boulder Creek. Meet at Sawhill Ponds Wildlife Area parking lot (west of 75th between Valmont and Jay Roads) at 7:00 a.m. For more information, call Steve at 303-494-2468 or email [stephen.jones@earthlink.net](mailto:stephen.jones@earthlink.net). Joint trip with BCNA

Audubon field trips are always free, fun and informative. Call Wes Sears if you would lead one this spring or summer. 303-499-4751.

**ADMINISTRATION REVERSES DECISION TO REMOVE FEDERAL WETLANDS PROTECTION**

*'Isolated' Wetlands Will Continue to be Protected Under the Clean Water Act*

**Washington, D.C., Wednesday, December 16, 2003** – Humans, birds, and wildlife scored a major victory today as the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that they would not to move forward with a proposal to remove so-called "isolated" wetlands from federal protections under Clean Water Act.

For full story, see [http://www.audubon.org/news/press\\_releases/index.html](http://www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/index.html)