



On The Wing

Volume 34, Number 5

Boulder County Audubon Society Newsletter

September 2004

Boulder County Audubon Society "Complete Makeover"

Complete makeover is not much of an exaggeration. Even prior to the departure of our president in June, BCAS had a severe shortage of officers, Board members, and committee chair people. However, a number of people have stepped forward to begin the process of rebuilding BCAS. Initial steps include:

- Meeting September 14 with a facilitator from National Audubon to help focus on goals for BCAS;
- Rewriting Chapter bylaws that have been outmoded by changes of NAS policies; and
- Recruiting new people for Board and committee positions.

September 14 Retreat

A major step in this process will be a retreat on September 14. Everyone interested is invited to participate.

The meeting will feature Lynn Teneffoss, National Audubon Society (NAS) VP of State Programs and Chapter Services, who will act as a facilitator to help us chart new directions for BCAS. The purpose of the meeting is to focus the rebuilding process on a few specific goals and the means to pursue them. Discussions leading up to this meeting have centered on a few program areas, which is just the first step in establishing goals. These include:

- Adopt the local "Audubon at Home" program to encourage the development of backyard wildlife habitat. This effort is already underway under the leadership of Connie Holsinger, who is producing a book on the topic with local xeriscape expert Jim Knopf and our favorite illustrator, Susie Mottashed.
- Contribute to the Important Bird Areas program in Colorado. Important Bird Areas, or IBAs, are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of bird. IBAs include sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. IBAs may be a few acres or thousands of acres, but usually they are discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape.
- Rebuild the BCAS community outreach program. This includes education programs, staffing tables at such events as the Boulder Creek Festival, and representation at public discussions, such as the recent meetings concerning the OSMP Visitor Management Plan.



Susie Mottashed

BCAS 4th Tuesday Program Series

Sept 28, 7:30 PM

Ted Floyd

Ted Floyd, the editor of *Birding* magazine and a resident of Boulder, will talk to us about "The Changing Face of Birding: Challenges and Opportunities." His talk will focus specifically on some recent ornithological developments with direct relevance to birders in the Boulder area. Topics to be covered will include: The growth of birding and birder demographics; new electronic, print, and other resources for birders; and current and shifting paradigms for bird identification and bird study more generally. Ted will review the "Top 10 Bird Identification Challenges in Boulder County", and he will even explain how to separate the all-new, A.O.U.-approved Cackling Goose from the good ol' fashioned Canada Goose.

October 26 - "Elk"

C. U. Professor Mel Cundiff

(see page 4)

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. Contact Scott Severs (303)684-6430

We meet at the Meadows Branch Library, Sept 14, noon to 7 PM. Bring a lunch and afternoon snacks. (continued, p. 2)

(continued from page 1)

Bylaws Revision

Revising bylaws is nobody's favorite job, but the current BCAS version is greatly out of date. The NAS revised its relationship with and requirements for chapters in 2001. Our bylaws still contain outmoded NAS requirements for chapters, as well as confusing definitions of the positions and terms of officers, board members, and committee chairs.

A draft revision was produced in July by a committee of Linda Andes-Georges, Bob Turner, Scott Severs, and George and Marti Oetzel. If you want to review and comment on the proposed revisions, any of these people will be happy to send you a copy (email preferred). The full Board will discuss and approve a final version sometime this fall.

Board and Committees

Most important, longtime chapter stalwarts Scott Severs and Wes Sears have agreed to serve as Interim President and Vice President through the end of 2004. We will have to find replacements then. According to our draft bylaws, officers are to be selected in May for a full term.

We introduced new Board members, Linda Andes-Georges, Connie Holsinger, Susie Mottashed, and John Tumasonis in the May issue of OTW. Susie has agreed to chair the Education Committee and combine that with her other interests to rebuild the outstanding education program that BCAS had a few years ago. In addition to sharing the job of BCAS secretary with Bev Baker, Linda spearheaded the bylaws revision. John reports on another innovative BCAS field trip in this issue. Connie's connections with NAS have proved valuable already, as she arranged for the visit by Lynn Tennefoss.

You may notice in the adjacent box that most Board members also serve in other positions. BCAS will be a stronger and healthier organization when we have more people involved and fewer doing two jobs.

If you're interested in helping with the BCAS makeover, you're welcome to join the team. We welcome a diversity of interests, and there are plenty of interesting jobs available.

Field Trips

Somehow, scheduling field trips for this period fell through the cracks. Watch COBIRDS, Nature Net, and the BCAS Web site for announcements of impromptu trips.

Would someone like to assist in field trip coordination? Contact John Tumasonis, (303)926-8779.

Boulder County Audubon Society 2004

Officers

Interim President **Scott Severs** (303)684-6430
 Interim Vice President **Wes Sears** (303)499-4751
 Secretary (1) **Beverly Baker** (303)666-1972
 Secretary (2) **Linda Andes-Georges** (303)772-3239
 Treasurer **Curtis Williams** (303)494-5071

Other Board of Directors

Connie Holsinger (303)652-2853
Susie Mottashed (303)499-0984
George Oetzel (303)543-3712
John Tumasonis (303)926-8779
Bob Turner (303)499-2669

Standing Committees

Membership Chairs **Bob & Gail Turner** (303)499-2669
 Newsletter Editor **George Oetzel** (303)543-3712
 Web Site **Curtis Williams** (303)494-5071
 Conservation/Legislation Chair **New chair needed**
 Programs **Wes Sears** (303)499-4751 & **Scott Severs** (303)541-0784
 Field Trips **John Tumasonis** 303-926-8779
 Education **Susie Mottashed** (303)499-0984
 Bird-A-Thon Team Coordinator **Bill Kaempfer** (303)443-3175

On The Wing E-mail: nature@birdhike.com
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Look for *On the Wing* in PDF format
 on: <http://www.boulderaudubon.org>
 Available before you receive your copy in the mail.

AUDUBON COLORADO'S FALL RENDEZVOUS: Sept. 30 - Oct. 3, 2004

This fall we will be holding our first ever Audubon Colorado Rendezvous-an exciting statewide gathering for all Audubon members and their families. This will be an opportunity to renew friendships with colleagues from all around the state and to share ideas about conservation, environmental education and other activities that you and/or your chapter are involved in. It will also be a great time to get outdoors together for birding and nature walks in the mountains and valleys near Buena Vista. We're planning a fascinating program full of information about birds and other wildlife in Colorado, skills training to help strengthen your chapter, updates on conservation issues, fun field trips, and the Biggest Big Sit ever organized! You'll hear from excellent speakers, including conservation leaders and natural history experts from inside and outside Colorado.

For more information see
<http://www.auduboncolorado.org/Rendezvous2004.htm>

Notes from the Field

Rocky Mountain National Park June 26, 2004 — Wes Sears

Thirty people participated in this year's trip, including a couple from Texas and another from Florida. We split into three groups with Wayne and Dianna Johnston leading one, Beverly another, and I leading the third. As we were forming our groups, a goshawk soared overhead. Not a bad start.

Upper Beaver Meadows is an especially good area to study, or just watch the following: the two cavity-nesting swallows, tree and the violet-green; the two sapsuckers, red-naped and Williamson's; empidonax flycatchers; Lincoln's sparrow, house wren and ruby-crowned kinglet. Of course, many others are always seen, but these species seem to be always present here and are not necessarily as findable other places.

Of particular interest to me this year were the small (empidonax) flycatchers. We found three nests within an area of a couple of acres. One contained eggs; the other two were still being built. All three were below eye level and a few feet from the trail. At least two of them were cordilleran nests. We also found western wood pewee. That's one I can still hear with aids. All together we recorded about 30 species

The following weekend, the Johnstons went back to the same area and found three-toed woodpeckers. When they told me this, I figured, "Ah hah. They nest later than some of the others." Not so according to the books. Apparently we just missed them the week before.

The streamside tree in this area, which actually grows like a large bush, is the thinleaf alder. They seem to be dying. Does anyone have more information about why this is so?

Boulder Mountain Parks Sept 5, 2004 — John Tumasonis

There were 3 participants on this trip. Areas covered included areas adjoining 1st and 2nd Flatiron, Gregory Canyon parking area, a section of the Saddle Rock Trail, a section of the Bluebell Trail, the Amphitheatre Trail, McClintock Trail, a section of the Mesa Trail, Skunk Creek, Green Mt. Cemetery, a small section of Chautauqua Park, and Doudy Draw. Ecosystems covered included ponderosa pine forests, mixed doug fir and ponderosa, sandstone cliffs and canyons, riparian woodlands, mixed grasslands, and mixed shrub and brushland.

Notable among the 48 species were a Sage Thrasher at Doudy Draw, immature Blue Grosbeaks, 9 Brown Creepers, and a flying Prairie Falcon.



Empidonax Flycatcher — Susie Mottashed

Brainard Lake Area July 3, 2004 — John Tumasonis

There were 7 participants on this trip including the trip leader. All participants were experienced hikers. Three were beginning birders and four were experienced birders. Participants were from Boulder, Denver, Loveland, Ault, and Louisville.

This was a 2nd in a series of Boulder County Audubon field trips breaking with the more traditional birding outings. On this trip we birded on foot in the willow tarns surrounding Brainard Lake. There was about a 7 mile hike, birding along Long Lake, Lake Isabelle, and the on the trail up to Pawnee Pass. A quick stop was also made at Red Rocks Lake. We did not hike all the way to Pawnee Pass, but opted to spend some time in the tundra looking for pipits and ptarmigan. Ecological areas covered included willow tarn and lakesides, spruce forests, tundra, krumholtz, willow riparian areas, and mixed open meadows with spruce trees. Weather was with us – no rain, sunny bright blue skies, and warm weather. Later in the day some light cloud cover rolled in, but the temperatures remained fairly warm. Species numbers were low, (29) but large numbers of several target species were seen and heard.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets were outstanding, with many songs and good looks. We also had good looks at male Pine Grosbeaks and saw American Pipits skylarking.

BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, MARCH - APRIL 2004
Gillian and Alex Brown, 4560 Darley Avenue, Boulder, CO 80305.

Birders were out looking for arriving migrants during both months; it was our more normal resident birds that were poorly reported. Any month when birds such as **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and **Brown Creeper** fail to be reported, one knows that the coverage (at least in the foothills) has been poor. These two months see the change from winter to summer birds, and can potentially include sightings of both late wintering birds and early migrants. By the end of April shorebird migration was well under way, although no peeps had yet arrived. Corvids were either reported in small numbers, or (as in the case of **Scrub Jay**) not reported at all. It is possible that some of these birds have been badly affected by West Nile virus.

It is always interesting to compare the arrival dates of migrants. Perhaps the most amazing thing is how remarkably consistent they often are. For instance, **Great Egret** and **White-faced Ibis** both arrived in the county on the average arrival date for their species. Many others arrived within a day or two of the average. **Barn Swallow**, however, was first seen on March 20, a full two weeks before the previous earliest date. **Vesper Sparrow** was also reported for the first time at the end of March, more than a week before its previous early date. Interestingly, both these two species had among the smallest spread in arrival dates. Obviously, this spread will be greater after 2004. Quite a few birds that one would expect to see in April were missed. Among this category was **Eared Grebe**, **Least Sandpiper**, **Wilson's Phalarope**, and **American Pipit**. It is always hard to gauge whether this is due to a genuine absence or poor observing coverage. **Sapsuckers** have always had a very large spread of arrival dates from mid-March to the end of May. This year both **Red-naped Sapsucker** and **Williamson's Sapsucker** will have arrival dates well past the average as they were not reported either month.

Eight gull species were reported in March. In the last few years **Lesser Black-backed Gull** has become a reasonably common sighting. We have had reports of **Mew Gull** for the last eight consecutive years with the number of sightings generally increasing. **Thayer's Gull** are being reported fairly regularly, probably because of better identification skills. **Glaucous Gull** was probably the most unusual gull with a norm of one or two sightings a year. The other gull species seen were **Franklin's Gull**, **Ring-billed Gull**, **California Gull** and **Herring Gull**. In addition **Bonaparte's Gull** was reported in April.

In summary, although these two months produced a lot of new species for the year, there was not a single bird reported that had not been seen the previous year. Many birds were not reported that might be considered normally present. A total of 116 bird species was seen in March, and 136 species in April. This is a respectable total for March, but somewhat on the low side for April. For a complete listing, please look on the Boulder Audubon website at www.boulderaudubon.org.

**CONTRIBUTORS TO THE
MARCH & APRIL INVENTORY**

Linda Andes-Georges, Elaine Bentz, Joan Bloom, Maggie Boswell, Andy Boyce, Alex & Gillian Brown, Jack Collom, Carol Cushman, Raymond E. Davis, Tom Delaney, Christian Demont-Heinrich, Gene Ellis, Libby Ellis, Rob & Amanda Ellis, Tammy Ellsworth, Bob Evans, Ted Floyd, Steve Frye, Peter Gent, Jean Pierre Georges, Paula Hansley, Jim and Susan Hengeveld, Ann Hicks, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Loch Kilpatrick, Joan Kleypas, Doreen & Ken Leonard, Cherie Long, Linda Mahoney, Gene & Lynn Monroe, Suzanne A. Olmsted, Nathan Pieplow, Jeff Price, Scott Rashid, Ira Sanders, Bill Schmoker, Scott Severs, Randy Siebert, Debra Sparn, Bob Spencer, Marianne Stilson, Joyce Takamine, John Tumasonis, David J. Waltman, Chris Wood, Larry and Roni Wilson, Eric Zorawowicz.

October 26 Program - "Elk"

C. U. Professor Mel Cundiff

The conclusion of the annual rut is an excellent time to learn about the lives of elk and the effects of their burgeoning population on our CO environment.



G. Oetzel, RM Nat Park, 8/27/04

All About Membership

There has been some confusion about the relationship between memberships in the National Audubon Society (NAS) and the Boulder County Audubon Society (BCAS). Herewith, I attempt an explanation.

When you join the NAS, they check your zip code. If it's one on their list of codes in Boulder County, you are added to their BCAS mailing list. Currently, the newsletter editor receives an updated NAS mailing list every month. In the August update, there are 1064 members on this list. If you are on the NAS list, you have become a member of the BCAS. We might call that the passive route to BCAS membership. Perhaps you didn't say, "I want to join Boulder County Audubon." It just happened.

However, you are treated in all respects as a BCAS member. In addition to receiving *Audubon* magazine from NAS, you also receive each issue of *On the Wing*, with its announcements of events and other topics of interest in Boulder County. You may also attend meetings, go on field trips, and serve on the Board or activity committees.

If we are to revitalize Boulder Audubon, we need more active members. A good way to express your active interest in BCAS is to send in your \$20 to become a local member. This contribution helps to support our programs, including publication and mailing of *On the Wing*. While NAS provides us with a generous mailing list, they don't send along with it the generous support to pay the cost even of our five issues per year. And, by all means, do participate in BCAS activities. If we have more active members, we can also have more activities for you to participate in.

Finally, if there is some reason you would rather not join NAS, you can still join BCAS. In that case, you won't receive *Audubon* magazine, and you won't be supporting Audubon's national programs. However, you may participate in all activities and receive *On the Wing*. Your support for our local activities will be much appreciated.

Local memberships run from July to the following June. If you first join in the spring, your membership will run more than a year to the following June. Non-renewals are dropped as of the January issue of OTW.

There is a convenient membership form on the back page.

Science Watch

All from Science Magazine, 20 Aug 2004

Reproductive Failure Threatens Bird Colonies on North Sea Coast

Kittiwakes, Arctic Terns, and others have had a poor reproductive year, apparently because of difficulty in finding adequate food. Human fishermen also have had difficulty locating the sand eels that are a major part of the birds' food supply. There is speculation that rising sea temperatures and changing currents may be the underlying cause.

Bees from the Rainforest Add Up to a \$62,000 Coffee Buzz

Researchers focused on a single coffee plantation in Costa Rica and measured the value of one ecosystem service, the pollination of the coffee crop by bees. The team examined 11 bee species that visited coffee flowers from stands of rainforest bordering the farm. Flowers near the forests received twice as many bee visits and twice as much pollen deposition as did flowers far from forests, they found. As a result, coffee plants near the forests had 20% greater yields and 27% fewer deformed beans. Combining these data with market prices for coffee, the team calculated that bee pollination accounts for \$62,000, or 7% of the farm's annual income.

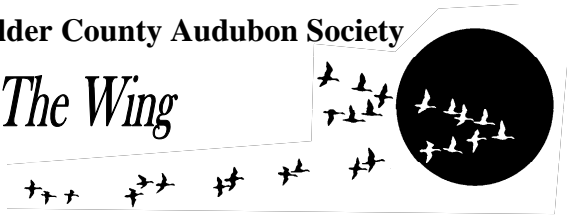
Just looking at the benefit from pollination, the value of preserving the natural forest stands is greater than the value of cutting them down for other uses. For example, cattle grazing would yield only \$24,000 per year.

Fighting Sudden Oak Death with Fire?

Researchers from the University of California collected data from state agencies on the presence of sudden oak death at different sites in California, as well as historical data of forest fires. They discovered that the disease was much less prevalent in areas that had burned since 1950. One reason, they speculate, could be that plant defenses against pathogens become weaker in older, unburned stands; trees need to invest more in competition with neighbors as stands age. Production of some defensive chemicals declines in older plants, for example.

Boulder County Audubon Society

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Program Sept 28
7:30 PM

Ted Floyd
The Changing Face of Birding:
Challenges and Opportunities

Boulder County Audubon Society Membership

When you join the National Audubon Society (NAS), you automatically become a member of the Boulder County Audubon Society (BCAS) as well. With that membership you receive the NAS quarterly *Audubon* and the BCAS newsletter *On the Wing* (5 issues annually), and you can participate in all BCAS activities.

However, BCAS receives only a small amount of your dues from NAS to support local activities, too little even to support your subscription to *On the Wing*. We encourage you to join BCAS to help support local activities.

Phone and email entries are optional

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

- \$20 Annual BCAS membership
- \$ _____ Additional contribution

Make check payable to *Boulder County Audubon Society*

Mail to: Boulder County Audubon Society
P.O. Box 2081
Boulder, CO 80306