



On The Wing

Volume 45, Number 2 *Boulder County Audubon Society Newsletter*

Apr-Aug 2015

BCAS 4th Tuesday Program Series

April 28, Tuesday, 7:15 p.m.

**Eric O'Dell, "Colorado Carnivores –
Lynx, River Otters and Wolverines -
Wow!"**

Eric O'Dell of Colorado Parks and Wildlife will describe the past efforts undertaken by CPW biologists to restore carnivore species to the state. The talk will focus on the processes, applications and measure of success of managing non-game carnivore species in Colorado with a lot of great pictures of these iconic animals. The talk will highlight the river otter and lynx projects, with a brief mention of wolverines.



CO Dept of Wildlife lynx photo

Eric grew up in Colorado and gained a strong appreciation of the outdoors from an early age. He attended Middlebury College in Vermont, traveled extensively for a variety of field jobs and then began graduate school at Colorado State University where he completed his Master's degree in Wildlife Biology. He began working for Colorado Division of Wildlife in 2000. He has worked for that agency, now Colorado Parks and Wildlife, in a variety of capacities since then - as a Habitat Biologist based in an NRCS field office, as a Conservation Biologist, as the Grassland Coordinator, and now as the Species Conservation Program Manager for Carnivores. In this role he directs conservation and management programs to aid in the establishment and protection of native, non-game carnivore species to the state.

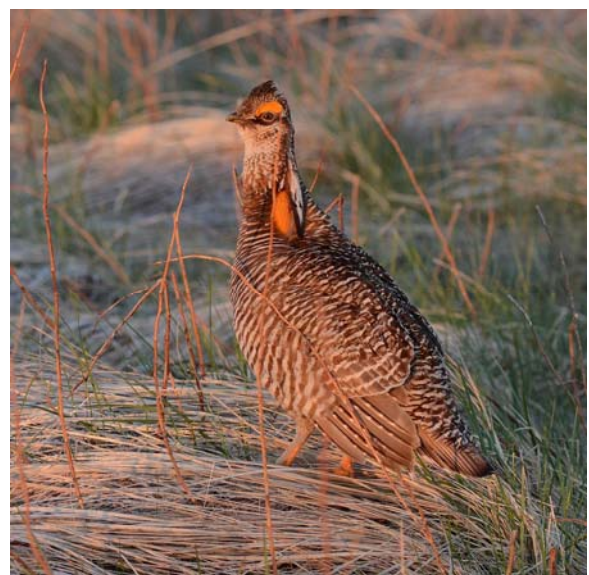
*Program Meetings at Unitarian Universalist Church
of Boulder, 5001 Pennsylvania Ave. (west off 55th St.
between Arapahoe and Baseline)*

May 26, Tuesday, 7:15 p.m.

Steve Jones, "Sandhills Serenade"

Covering more than 20,000 square miles, the Nebraska Sandhills comprise the largest remaining expanse of native prairie in North America. From trumpeting sandhill cranes and booming prairie-chickens in early spring to dramatic thunderstorms and wailing screech-owls in late summer, these new recordings capture the wild beauty of this breathtaking landscape. Steve will present his most recent images of wildlife, wildflowers, and dramatic landscapes, accompanied by wild sounds recorded during more than 400 nights of camping out alone in the Sandhills. He'll also give tips on when to visit and how to access remote wildlife-watching spots.

Steve Jones is past president of Boulder County Audubon and coordinator of the BCAS teen naturalist program. He is author/co-author of a half-dozen books on the natural history of the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain region. His and Ruth Carol Cushman's monthly *Nature Almanac* column has appeared in the *Boulder Daily Camera* for nine years. Copies of *Sandhills Serenade*, along with other recordings and books, will be available for purchase after the program.



*Prairie Chicken May 2014
Photo by Steve Jones*

Events: Spring-Summer 2015

Monday, May 11th, JEOP-BIRDY!, 6:30-9 p.m.,

You know the format, but this contest will only be answered by bird questions. Alex Trebec will be impersonated by **Christian Nunes**, with the three contestants played by Boulder County Audubon's own, **Pam Piombino**, along with **Steve Frye** of the Wild Bird Center and **Peter Gent** of Colorado Field Ornithologists. Join in the hilarity and support the events being planned for International Migratory Bird Day. \$20 a ticket, food and wine provided, limited to 60 guests. For tickets: Dairy Center Box Office at: 303.440.7826 x110 Dairy Center for the Arts, 2590 Walnut Street. Sponsored by: Environment for the Americas

July 10-13, 2015 National Audubon Convention

Prepare to join Audubon's amazing network of dedicated chapter, centers, state and national leaders to celebrate One Audubon! The next biennial Audubon Convention will take place at the Lansdowne Resort on the banks of the Potomac River, near historic Leesburg, Virginia on July 10-13, 2015. Enjoy four full days of exciting field trips, inspiring speakers, in-depth hands-on workshops and the camaraderie only Audubon can provide. Registration and lodging details at: <http://www.audubon.org/content/audubon-convention-2015>

Saturday, May 16, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. International Migratory Bird Day

Celebrate the return of the "birds without borders" with a Walk In The Wild at Walden Ponds, 75th Street in Boulder. This is a family event, with bird hikes, information stations, live birds of prey and much more. Location: Walden Ponds, off of 75th Street in Boulder.

Saturday, May 23, 12 a.m. until 11:59 p.m. BIRDATHON! Quest for the Glory and Prizes!

We will once again ask all of the area bird watchers to join us for one full and crazy 24 hour day of counting all the birds you can find within the confines of Boulder County. Briefly, you collect monetary pledges for the number of species identified (i.e., so much per species seen). Form your team of 4 now! \$50 minimum donation to be eligible for prizes. Go for the glory and help support BCAS's various programs. Email organizer, Pam Piombino for information: piombino.pam@gmail.com

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Wildlife Inventory

Alex and Gillian Brown (303-494-3042)

Nestbox Monitoring Coordinator

Doug Beltman (beltland22@gmail.com)

*On the Wing © 2015
Boulder County Audubon Society*

**Next issue deadline:
(Sept 2015 issue) Aug 15**

Contact editor via link at:

Field Trips: April—May**Wednesday, April 8, 2015, 8-?****Rabbit Mountain Ramble****No reservation necessary.**

Leader: Carl Starace: Join Carl for an early spring ramble about Rabbit Mountain. This County open space parcel is one of the best places to hear the haunting song of the Canyon Wren and to see Rock Wrens. Golden Eagles regularly soar overhead, as do other hawks and falcons. Say's Phoebes are early and expected, as are Mountain Bluebirds and often, Loggerhead Shrikes. Meet at the trailhead located along North 53rd Street. There is a sign directing you to Rabbit Mountain on the north side of Ute Highway (Rte. 66) east of Lyons.

Saturday, April 25, 7:30-11:00**Fowler Trail, Eldorado Mountain Park****Limited to 12****Reservations:** Ph.: 720-890-2628; Cell: 303-263-1714 plhansley@gmail.com

Leader: Paula "Ears" Hansley: Meet at RTD parking lot (dirt), NE corner of the intersection of highways 93 and 170 in Marshall and carpool to trailhead on Boulder County Rd. 67, which takes off from Hwy. 170 near Eldorado Springs. Bring a snack and water. We will hike south on the Fowler Trail parallel to the hogback and the burn area where Lewis's Woodpeckers nested last year! This trail is unique for its wide variety of habitat -- from dense shrubbery to open ponderosa forest. As we bird, we will enjoy fantastic views of the grasslands and mesas south of Boulder. Early migrants will be skulking in the bushes while swifts and falcons fly overhead. Will we be lucky enough to have the Grace's Warbler return again this year? Difficulty: Easy, Distance: 2.8 miles round trip to the Boulder Canal and back.

Saturday, May 2, 11: 30 a.m. Behind the Scenes at the Birds of Prey Raptor Rehabilitation Foundation**Limited to 15****Reservations:** piombino.pam@gmail.com

What does it take to receive an injured, ill, or poisoned bird of prey and rehabilitate it with the goal of releasing it back to the wild? Join Andrea Lutz to visit this most successful of rehabilitation facilities. How are they handled? What are they fed? What are the challenges and how are successes measured? You will meet the birds that are used for education and the many babies that are admitted in spring and early summer. Meet at the East Boulder Recreation Center to carpool.

Field Trips: June**Saturday, June 6, 6-8 p.m. Wildflower Stroll****Limited to 15****Reservations:** piombino.pam@gmail.com

Join Open Space and Mountain Parks rangers extraordinaire Lynn Reidel and Dave Sutherland, for an informative early evening walk. Enjoy the June blooms along the Foothills Trail at the height of the wildflower season. Lynn and Dave will relate interesting facts and how different cultures have used the various plants. They will provide snake chaps for people to wear (there is a good chance of seeing rattlers). Meet at the Foothills Trailhead that is east of US36 and just north of where 28th Street and Broadway intersect.

Sunday, June 14, 7a.m. Breeding Bird Survey on Keith Owen's Native Prairie Restoration Site**Limited to 10****Reservations:** curlewsj@comcast.net

Leaders: Steve Jones and Petrea Mah. Join us for a hike through 70 acres of a former tree farm that is being restored to native short grass prairie. For the second year, we will do a breeding bird survey to document changes in avifauna. In hedge rows between the plots, grow many different native and exotic trees. This trip should be fascinating both to botanists and birders. Afterwards, we will stop at Boulder County Audubon's Dodd Reservoir prairie to see how our restoration efforts are progressing by using the same protocol as the previous property. Bring a snack, water and sunscreen for the hike. Meet at the Tom Watson parking lot across from Coot Lake on 63rd.

Sunday, June 21, 2015, 7:30 a.m.**Birds and Butterflies, Arapaho Ranch,****Limited to 15****Reservations:** piombino.pam@gmail.com

Leaders: Jan Chu and Pam Piombino: Arapaho Ranch is a gorgeous large and private property that is held as a conservation easement. There are varied habitats where we can expect to see and/or hear upwards of 30 species of high elevation birds, including Band-tailed Pigeon, Eagles, Goshawk, Kinglets, Crossbills and perhaps hear a Swainson's Thrush. There are Bluebird/Tree Swallow boxes, with great photo-ops of these species. Many lovely butterflies flit about the open meadows and trails. Middle Boulder Creek flows through the land and at least 7 moose have taken up residence in the last 5 years.

Field Trips: July

Friday and Saturday, July 3 and 4, North American Butterfly Association Annual Butterfly Count, Cal-Wood Education Center.

Reservations: Jan Chu,
chuhouse@hotmail.com or 303 494 1108

Join us for an overnigher on this private educational facility situated on 1200 acres of mixed habitats, including ponderosa, spruce /fir, ponds and butterfly filled meadows:

July 3: Preliminary search and identification of butterflies. Later, the opportunity to night 'listen' for owls (optional). Dinner, then camp overnight.

July 4: Early bird walk (optional) Breakfast, and then begin the Butterfly Count for nationally recorded sightings. At the end of the day, we will tabulate all the butterflies seen.

Dinner and breakfast provided, but you must bring your own lunches for both days.

\$42 per person, youngsters are welcome with adult supervision. We will be camping two miles east of the lodge. This facility is located above Jamestown, so the evening might be cool.

Bring binoculars, nets,
Butterflies of CO Front Range or other ID books.

Thursday, July 9, 7-11 AM:

Birds and Butterflies of Upper Gregory Canyon

Limited to 15, Reservations:

curlwsj@comcast.net or 303 494 2468

Leader: Steve Jones, who will lead this outing during which you will savor the songs of two-dozen forest bird species, then observe fritillaries, crescents, sulphurs, and skippers nectaring on blooming mints and sunflowers. This ecosteward-led trip will provide information about how you can adopt your own wild area for study and protection.

Sunday, July 11, 2014, 7:30 a.m.-10:30

Sandstone Ranch

No reservation necessary.

Leader: Carl Starace: Breeding season will be winding down, but in this delightful, tucked away park, we should find colorful Blue Grosbeaks, Orioles, Vireos, Peewees, Goldfinches and perhaps see the Barn Owls that usually nest in the cliff. Bring water, a snack and mosquito repellent. Meet at 2525E. Ken Pratt Blvd,[CO 119], in front

Field Trips: July—Aug

Sunday, July 26, 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Bug Safari!

No reservation necessary

Leader: Scott Severs, one of the best all around naturalists in Boulder County. Join us for a summer safari of the bug type. We'll look for dragonflies, spiders, beetles, butterflies, and other critters of the microcosmos during the peak of their activity. Bring water, hats, cameras, and bug juice. No insect nets please. Meet at the Walden Ponds parking lot off of 75th Street in Boulder. All ages and abilities are welcome.

Saturday, August 15, 7:30-10:30 a.m.

Birds and Insects

of Boulder's Tallgrass Prairies

Limited to 12, Reservations:

curlwsj@comcast.net or 303 494 2468

Join eco-stewards Steve Jones and Janet McLachlan on a leisurely stroll through the tallgrass and mixed-grass prairies of the South Boulder Creek State Natural Area. We should see monarch and wood nymph butterflies, along with blue grosbeaks, waxwings, milkweed beetles, mantids, and lots of other insects. Meet at the South Boulder Creek west trailhead, on South Broadway one mile south of Greenbriar Blvd.

August (date not yet set),

Watch on Nature-net and Co-Birds for an announcement

What's a "White Roof?"

A roof treated with white, solar-reflecting paint benefits the climate three times more than a green [i.e., planted over with growing materials] roof, scientists at California's Lawrence Berkeley Natl. Lab have found. Rather than simply cooling the air, white roofs reflect sunlight back into the atmosphere. ... White roofs are easily the cheapest of the [white, green and black options], costing \$9 per sq. foot less than green roofs and more than \$2 less than black roofs. A 2008 study found that if white roofs were installed worldwide, they would offset two-thirds of our annual [world] output of CO₂.

(*Sierra Club Magazine*, March/April 2015, page 34)

Mountain Bluebird
Sue Olmstead



BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, AUGUST - OCTOBER 2014

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

August was a slow summer month. **Grasshopper Sparrow** was the only new bird for the year. This is an easily missed, rather non-descript sparrow; the easiest way of locating this sparrow is by song. Other good sightings included **Barn Owl**, **Flammulated Owl**, **Black Swift**, **Common Poorwill**, and **Nashville Warbler**. **Sage Thrashers** appeared in suitable habitat in fair numbers. There was evidence of shorebird migration with both **Semipalmated Sandpiper** and **Long-billed Dowitcher** being reported. Warbler migration was evidenced by **Wilson's Warblers** out on the plains. These were both seen during the day and heard at night. Sparrows were also heard migrating at night, although it is difficult to be sure of species and numbers. Altogether 149 bird species were reported in August. This is not an unusually low number of species, but a long way off the record 177 species seen in 2002.

Both birds and birders were extremely active in September, after the slow summer. A **Long-tailed Jaeger** on Boulder Reservoir was seen by many, and provided much discussion before it was settled as to which species of Jaeger people were seeing. **Sabine's Gulls** and a **Common Tern** were also seen on Boulder Reservoir and were new for the year. Shorebird migration was strong and included many good sightings of which **Black-bellied Plover**, **Upland Sandpiper** and **Red Phalarope** were new for the year. "Solitary Vireos" were seen in good numbers with both **Cassin's Vireo** and **Blue-headed Vireo** being reported for the first time this year, along with our more usual **Plumbeous Vireos**. A **Northern Mockingbird** made a first appearance for the year along with numerous **Sage Thrashers** and a few **Brown Thrashers**. A **Sprague's Pipit** was seen at Lagerman Reservoir, and **Chestnut-collared Longspurs** in the grasslands south-east of Boulder. **Tennessee Warbler** is more usually reported in the spring, but one was found in the Longmont area. Sparrows were obviously migrating with a few **Clay-colored Sparrows** being found among the flocks of **Chipping Sparrows**. **Cassin's Sparrow** and **Black-throated Sparrow** were both new sightings for the year. E-birds provided numerous reports of both common and unusual species resulting in more reports than average, and giving enough data that it was possible to see departure dates for some species. For instance, the last reports of **Western Kingbird** and **Eastern Kingbird** were on the 17th and 18th respectively. Altogether 205 bird species were reported in September making this a record month that may be difficult to surpass. The highest previous September total was 181 bird species in 2012.

The most exciting bird for October was a female **Magnificent Hummingbird** visiting a feeder in Coal Creek Canyon. The size of this hummingbird immediately marks it out as something different, although any hummingbird in October is a good sighting. October is definitely a changeover month with the last of our breeding migrants leaving, and our first wintering birds arriving. This was particularly obvious this October with many unusually late reports of migrants such as **Common Yellowthroat** and **Brewer's Sparrow**. A good example of the changeover was the last **Chipping Sparrows** of the summer being reported on the 7th and the first **American Tree Sparrows** reported on the 19th. A **Surf Scoter** on Lagerman Reservoir was a first sighting for the year, as the number of diving ducks steadily increased. A Mew Gull on Union Reservoir was also new for the year. In 2010 Winter Wren was split into two species, **Pacific Wren** (the more western species) and **Winter Wren**. We get both species in Colorado, particularly in the Front Range, and it is not always easy to tell which is present, as with the bird seen at Lagerman Reservoir. The **Golden-crowned Sparrow** returned to its location near the Teller Lakes feedlot for the 5th consecutive year. Other good sightings included **Cattle Egret**, **Broad-winged Hawk**, **Eastern Phoebe**, **Pinyon Jay**, and **Northern Waterthrush**. Altogether 149 bird species were reported in October, tying with the record set in 2002.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER INVENTORIES

Michael Abrams, Jean Pierre Andes-Georges, Margaret Arp, Mele Avery, Dale Ball, Scott Baron, Alan Bell, J.D. Birchmeier, Maureen Blackford, Boulder Bird Club, Kat Bradley-Bennett, Kitty Brigham, Alex & Gillian Brown, Peter Burke, David Cabrera, Al Clark, Carol Cogswell, Jeff Dawson, Alex de Latour, Bart Deferme, Todd Deininger, David Dowell, Michelle Durant, Chris Ebner, Martha Eubanks, Bill Fink, Ted Floyd, Christopher Gray, Bryan Guarente, Amanda & Matt H, Laurens Halsey, Paula Hansley, Jack Harlan, Indian Peaks Fall Bird Count, Adam Jack, Candice Johnson, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Jered Karr, Ted Keyel, Loch Kilpatrick, Robert King, Elena Klaver, Catherine Labio, Lark Latch, Cynthia Madsen, Petrea Mah, George Mayfield, Grant Medlin, Mark Miller, Mark Minner-Lee, Steve Miodinow, Lynn Monroe, Michael Morton, Nick Moore, Christian Nunes, Laura Osborn, Chris Owens, Eddie Owens, Susan Perry, Kris Petersen, Pam Piombino, Peter Ruprecht, Bill Schmoker, Scott Severs, Randy Siebert, Cathy Sheeter, Janet Shin, Bob Spencer, Carl Starace, Jorgen Thomsen, Jeremiah Trimble, John Tumasonis, John Vanderpoel, David Waltman, Wendy Wibbens, Tom Wilberding, Wild Bird Company.

Conservation Items from the Denver Audubon "Warbler" Newsletter

(<http://tinyurl.com/ks6kcq6>)

The Colorado Legislature is now in session, with several bills of interest to Audubon activists already in play. Our lobbyist Jen Boulton is, as usual, working to support the bills that protect wildlife habitat and to stop or amend bills that would have negative environmental effects:

HB1006 would increase funding and scope of a grant program for removal of "invasive phreatophytes," or water-loving trees, that have expanded their range since the floods of 2013. Tamarisk and Russian olive are mentioned specifically, but the language is broad enough to allow removal of important NATIVE trees, like willows and cottonwoods. Audubon wants to ensure that the funds can only be used to remove exotic phreatophytes. Why would anyone want to remove cottonwoods and willows, you ask. Because they do use a lot of water – but they also provide shade that reduces evaporation, stabilize stream banks, and provide important wildlife habitat. On balance, it's much better to leave them.

SB 93 would allow owners of mineral rights – such as oil and gas companies – to claim compensation from local governments if they think local ordinances reduce the market value of their mineral rights by 60%. This type of legislation is referred to as "takings" because it supports the view that governments that pass regulations are "taking" private property rights and must provide compensation. It's a way of keeping government from promulgating regulations to protect public health and safety and the environment. Audubon has long opposed legislation like this, and we will again.

SB 8, which is a great first step towards having water conservation included as part of land use planning by having the state Water Conservation Board develop a training program that demonstrates the importance and benefit of including water conservation throughout the planning process.

HB 1038, Flex Marketing– would allow water users to install efficiencies, then lease the water they save. It's a complex topic and needs work, so stay tuned.....

The usual bills to assert state primacy over federal lands (unconstitutional), the legislature's primacy over executive branch actions (probably unconstitutional) and a bill to allow bear hunting in the summer, when cubs are still dependent on their mother.

Plan to attend the 2015 Legislative Forum (see www.denveraudubon.org/conservation for details) and see how the bills are faring, and how you can help.

Author Polly Reetz provides conservation items in each issue of the Warbler. BCAS contributes some of the support for Jen Boulton.

Bird Watchers Help Federal Agencies Pinpoint Conservation Priorities

Birds switch "landlords" during the year, study shows; highlights need for cooperation

January 27, 2015, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Ithaca, N. Y.— Migratory birds are a little like college students moving from home to school and back over the year. With each move they switch landlords, encountering new rules and sometimes vastly different living conditions. Whereas college students generally survive just fine, migratory birds depend on the cooperation of their landlords to maintain the habitats they need.

That's the finding of one of the most detailed assessments of bird ranges ever conducted, work begun as part of the State of the Birds 2011 report and published this month in the journal *Ecological Applications*. The findings allow public land managers to know exactly which species are most dependent on specific pieces of protected land, and to see how those species fit into the larger context of the nation's open spaces.

"The initial observation that got everybody excited was evidence that birds switched between agencies across the annual cycle," said Frank La Sorte, a research associate at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the study's lead author. "This analysis enables managers to look at the full life cycles of the birds they want to protect, and to know specifically which other public land management agencies they'd want to cooperate with."

The study analyzed 308 species of birds that live on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service, the two largest public land managers in the western United States. Drawing on 1.7 million crowdsourced checklists submitted to the Cornell Lab's eBird project, the researchers modeled where each species occurred in each week of the year across the nation. They then overlaid those results on a map of land management compiled by Jocelyn Aycrigg of the National Gap Analysis Program at the University of Idaho, a coauthor of the study. The map showed not only which lands were managed by the agencies, but what levels of formal biodiversity protection the lands had.

The models are made possible by millions of volunteer reports from thousands of bird watchers who participate in eBird. It's an example of the very real connection the eBird program makes between skilled hobbyists and formal science and conservation. "It's an amazing thing and one that birders can be proud of," Rosenberg said, "How does my little old eBird checklist inform national conservation policy? This is how."



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<http://tiny.cc/ez7v6>

BCAS Board for Fiscal 2016

(Election to be held at the May 26 meeting)

Officers: Vote for one in each category

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Directors: Vote for up to eight

____ Mary Balzer

____ Raymond Bridge

____ Cindy Maynard

____ Donna Nespoli

____ Scott Severs

____ Ann Tagawa

____(Write-in)_____

Cut out and fill in the ballot and mail to BCAS, P.O. Box 2081, Boulder, CO 80306. Ballots will also be available at the May 26 program meeting.

Avoid Shifting Baselines Syndrome

“Sure, 2.3 million fish passed over the Bonneville Dam this year, but 16 million used to migrate up the Columbia annually; it is proof of our reduced standards—and the Endangered Species Act’s low bar—that we celebrate a fraction of historical runs. And shifting baselines have management implications. ‘What we have is a prevention of extinction policy, rather than a policy that achieves real recovery... Recovery would mean managing dams in a different way’—with more spill, or by breaching them altogether.”

“The Great Salmon Compromise,” by Ben Goldfarb in *High Country News*, Dec. 2014 Vol. 46, No. 2.



Making It Possible.

Leaving Only Footsteps? Think Again

This winter, as skiers and snowboarders unloaded gear for a day of sweat and powder-skiing, the researcher Kimberly Heinemeyer moved among them with a clipboard. Dr. Heinemeyer, a senior scientist with the research group Round River Conservation Studies, explains that she's studying the effect of recreation on wolverines. She asks skiers if they will wear a small orange GPS armband for the day that tracks their movement. Most people gladly agree. Wolverines, famously tough and elusive animals also known as "mountain devils," are in trouble in the region. Roughly 300 are thought to remain in the northern Rockies and Pacific Northwest. Climate change is eroding the late-spring snow-pack that the animals depend on to survive. Even so, in August, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service withdrew its proposal to list the animal as a "threatened" species under the Endangered Species Act. Environmental groups are suing.

Over the last five winters, scientists have been trapping and fitting GPS collars to wolverines in Idaho and now in Wyoming while also affixing them to snowmobilers and those backcountry skiers. Then they've tracked the movements. Preliminary findings show that wolverines move faster and more often on weekends when people are playing in their mountain habitat. That may mean trouble for these animals during the brutal winters of the high Rockies, where every-calorie counts. When we think of injuring nature, it is easy to point an accusing finger at mining companies and their strip mines or timber barons and their clear-cuts. But could something as mellow as backcountry skiing or a Thoreauvian walk in the woods cause harm, too?

More and more studies over the last 15 years have found that when we visit the great outdoors, we have much more of an effect than we realize. Even seemingly low-impact activities like hiking, cross-country skiing and bird-watching often affect wildlife, from bighorn sheep to wolves, birds, amphibians and tiny invertebrates, and in subtle ways.

Impacts from outdoor recreation and tourism are the fourth-leading reason that species are listed by the federal government as threatened or endangered, behind threats from nonnative species, urban growth and agriculture.

Of course not all wildlife is the same. Some species flee; others habituate. Some populations might be healthy enough to withstand disturbance; others, too fragile. We now know recreation is having impacts in ways that we hadn't imagined. We must plan accordingly. Only if nature is healthy will it be able to sustain and support us in the future, when we burst through the door after a long week and hit the trail, looking to lean on its strong shoulders.

NY Times, Feb 13, <http://nyti.ms/1zBCEPa> (excerpt)



Call for Changes in Data Collection at Wind Developments

(Media Release Washington, D.C., March 6, 2015)

The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has called on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to institute a new system of pre-construction risk assessment and bird and bat mortality data collection in connection with hundreds of thousands of bird (and bat) deaths being caused by wind turbines and the likelihood that that number could substantially exceed one million deaths when the industry reaches its full build out capacity by 2030 or before.

The ABC proposal was made in a letter to Department of Interior and FWS pursuant to their request for comments on information collection in connection with their land-based wind energy guidelines. It follows the entering of a guilty plea on January 6 from PacifiCorp that will require the company to pay \$2.5 million in fines, restitution and community service for violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act by killing 38 Golden Eagles and 336 other birds at two Wyoming wind farms.

ABC is asking FWS to institute a pre-construction risk assessment and bird mortality data collection that are based on:

1. studies conducted by independent, qualified experts selected by the FWS or a trusted consulting company hired by FWS;
2. costs being borne by wind energy companies;
3. all reports sent directly to the FWS, and not through the wind energy company, which would then have no opportunity to edit or alter the reports to their advantage;
4. reports being made available to the public to add an additional layer of scrutiny; and
5. mandatory requirement to conduct independent Environmental Assessments (EA) and obtain incidental take permits under the Endangered Species Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act when protected species are present.

The ABC letter commended the FWS for formally recognizing, in their comment solicitation, that there may be serious problems with their current voluntary system of siting and operational guidelines for the wind industry, which is based largely on self-reporting. The solicitation said that: "We are currently in the process of evaluating the efficacy and use of the Guidelines and the Service is considering regulatory options. Based on feedback from the wind energy industry and from Service staff, the Guidelines are often successful in improving communication and lead to development of wind projects that are safer for wildlife, but in other cases are not successful in preventing wind energy facilities from being constructed in areas of high risk to wildlife." However, ABC objected to the statement "often successful," asserting that there are no data to support such a statement.

Become a Supporting Member of Boulder Audubon

We get very little return from National Audubon dues and have to rely primarily on local funding to support Boulder County Audubon society activities. Supporting memberships are just \$20 annually. You can join online or download a printable form to send with your check. Visit <http://www.boulderaudubon.org/about.htm#membership>.

Paper copies of the Nov-Dec, Jan-Feb, and Mar-Apr issues of *On the Wing* are mailed only to BCAS Supporting Members who request them. The electronic edition, available online, has color pictures and usually includes extra articles.