



On The Wing

Volume 41, Number 5 Boulder County Audubon Society Newsletter

Nov-Dec 2011

Tuesday, November 22

Annual Holiday Sale—6:00 p.m.

Presentation—7:15 p.m.

Looking for a Unique Gift?

**Boulder County Audubon Society
Annual Sale!**

Come join the holiday festivities

Enjoy the unique opportunity to meet local authors and artists with a wide selection of nature art and books for both enjoyment and education.

- See and purchase “Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range”
- Calendars with a different Audubon print for each month
- Bird-friendly coffee (<http://www.birdsandbeans.com/>)
- Birds of Prey will come with some live raptors and gift certificates
- Visit the bargain table with great gifts at incredible prices.
- Visit the used book table for books at reasonable prices.

Coming Attractions

Fourth Tuesday Program Jan 24, 2012

“Barn Swallows Studies - Ecological and Evolutionary Connections Between Animal Behavior and Population Biology” presented by Rebecca (Becca) Safran, Assistant Prof at CU, studying behavioral and evolutionary ecology.

**Tue, Feb 21 (tentative), 7:00 p.m.
at Meadows Library**

Jan Chu and traveling companions will present a travelogue of their recent China trip, preceded by a social hour. See the January *On the Wing* or <http://www.boulderareaudubon.org> for more information.



Making It Possible.

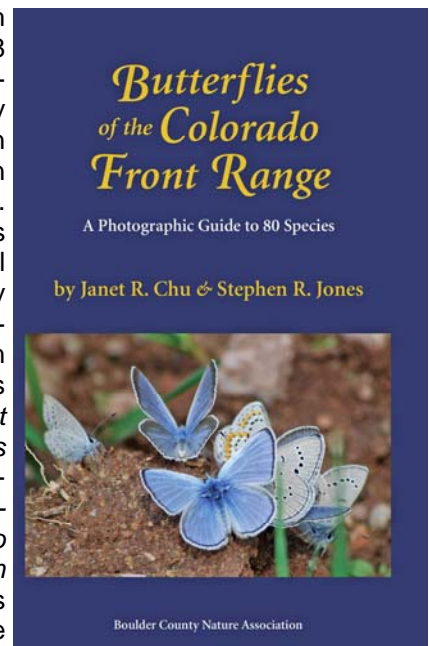
Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range

Jan Chu and Steve Jones

While preparing their new field guide on local butterflies, Jan Chu and Steve Jones photographed more than 100 species, and Jan added several new species to the Boulder County butterfly list, which now numbers more than 200. Their field guide, intended for beginning and more experienced butterfly-watchers, includes a striking color photo of each of the 80 species most likely to be seen in our area accompanied by details about the butterfly's life history and unique behaviors.

Jan and Steve's presentation will profile a few of our most intriguing butterfly families, including swallowtails, blues, and brushfoots.

Jan Chu taught high school biology for 38 years and has conducted butterfly population studies on Boulder County open space for 10 years. Since 1983 she has organized the annual 4th of July Butterfly Count at the Cal-Wood Education Center. Steve Jones is author of *The Last Prairie*, *A Sandhills Journal*, and co-author of the *Peterson Field Guide to the North American Prairie*. He works as a teacher and wildlife consultant.



A Photographic Guide to 80 Species

by Janet R. Chu & Stephen R. Jones

Boulder County Nature Association

Holiday Sale 6:00 p.m. Program 7:15 p.m.

Boulder Unitarian Universalist Church

5001 Pennsylvania Ave. (west off 55th St. between
Arapahoe and Baseline)

Nov-Dec Field Trips

Saturday, November 5, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. "Wetlands Bus Birding, Sombrero Marsh"

With Petrea Mah and Boulder County Audubon. Please be on time - the bus will not wait! Meet at Scott Carpenter Park. Join us for a bus ride to the bird watching spot. We'll meet near the Long JUMP bus stop on Arapahoe on the north side of Scott Carpenter Park (30th and Arapahoe in Boulder), and bus out to Sombrero Marsh for an easy walk to look for ducks and other wetland birds. We will do a brief orientation to wetland birding on the bus as we ride to this alkaline salt marsh that is Boulder County's largest natural wetland. Please bring water, a snack, and footwear suitable for easy trail hiking; also bird guides and binoculars if you have them.

Tuesday, November 15, 7:00 p.m., CU Museum of Natural History

"Look Who's Moved into the Neighborhood" Panel discussion followed by questions from the audience, all about birds in Boulder County, featuring Ted Floyd, Peter Gent, Joanna Hubbard and Steve Jones.

Sunday, December 18, All Day, "Christmas Bird Count"

Come out and enjoy the annual Christmas Bird Count this year. Call leader Bill Schmoker, 303- 702-9589 (bill@schmoker.org) to volunteer for this all-day event.

Thursday, December 22, 7-11 a.m. "Winter Solstice sunrise hike on East Boulder-White Rocks Trail"

Each Winter Solstice morning for 25 years, BCNA members and fellow travelers have gathered on the banks of Boulder Creek to welcome the first sunrise of the new year. Many participants read poems or quotes to commemorate the occasion. Geese, ducks, and circling hawks provide accompaniment. Dress warmly for this one-mile stroll down to the creek. It's the cold, mist, and hoar frost that attracted us to this venue in the first place!. Breakfast follows at the Golden Gate Café in Niwot. No RSVP is necessary, but for more information, contact Steve Jones:curlewsj@comcast.net; 303-494-2468.

BCAS Organizes Teen Naturalists Group

All middle school and high school students are invited to join the newly-organized Boulder County Audubon teen naturalist group for two exciting trips this fall:

December 3 or 10: Wintering raptor survey, with Steve Jones. We'll search for and map locations of eagles, hawks, and falcons in eastern Boulder County and contribute our observations to the Boulder County Nature Association wintering raptor survey database. No previous experience with raptor watching or birdwatching is required. Call or e-mail Steve at 303-494-2468; curlewsj@comcast.net.

Sunday, December 18: Christmas Bird Count on Mount Sanitas, with Marcel and Joel Such and Renée Haip. Join us for a day hiking in the field tracking birds of foothills forests and cliffs. Results of this 111-year-old count contribute to bird conservation throughout North America. No previous birdwatching experience is required. Call or e-mail Marcel at [].

Future outings will include butterfly counts, nature photography workshops, bioblitzes, bat surveys, and much more. Please tell your friends!

- Sarah Bexell and Steve Jones

Boulder County Audubon Society

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Linda Andes-Georges (303)772-3239

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Web Site

Amy Schlotthauer (303)402-0905

Audubon of Colorado Liaison

Bob Turner (303)499-2669

Christmas Bird Count Coordinator

Bill Schmoker (303)702-9589

Wildlife Inventory

Alex and Gillian Brown (303)494-3042

On the Wing © 2011 Boulder County Audubon Society

Next issue deadline: (Jan 2012 issue) Dec 12.

Contact editor via link at: www.boulderaudubon.org/newsletter.htm

Burrowing Owl Volunteers Locate Three Nests

Steve Jones and Sue Cass

Nearly 50 Boulder County Audubon volunteers devoted more than 400 hours searching for nesting burrowing owls on Boulder County open space this spring and summer. A total of three nests were found, all at Carolyn Holmberg Rock Creek Farm Open Space west of Broomfield. These nests produced at least 14 young.

Volunteers observed some interesting behaviors at one of the Rock Creek Farm nests, located in the northern portion of the property. On July 11 Chris Petrizzo saw an adult owl shadowing a prairie dog from a couple of feet away as the rodent excavated one of its burrows and periodically pouncing on insects uncovered by the excavation. Later Chris saw one of the fledglings chase a prairie dog into its burrow. On August 2 he witnessed a stalking and wrestling bout that culminated in one fledgling pinning another on its back! Several observers reported seeing adult burrowing owls strafing passing coyotes.

Other volunteers, while not finding burrowing owls, spotted a variety Boulder County birds of special concern on or adjacent to Boulder County Open Space, including Great Egret, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike, Brown Thrasher, Lark Bunting, and Orchard Oriole.

A total of 6 Burrowing Owl nests were documented on City of Boulder Open Space this summer. These nests fledged 18 or 19 young. While these totals may seem encouraging, we believe that fledging rates in Boulder County remain too low to sustain healthy populations of Burrowing Owls. We suspect that predation by urban-adapted mammals and raptors (not to mention automobiles) contributes to these low fledging rates. Our hope is that further study will enable us to pinpoint factors that lead to nesting success and then protect or improve nesting habitat in potentially productive areas.

We're grateful to Boulder County Parks and Open Space staff for providing maps, easy access to properties, coordination with agricultural tenants, and cheerful and enthusiastic support of our efforts throughout the survey period. We thank all the volunteers who devoted so many hours to this project; every single volunteer completed every single survey he or she committed to during the four-month duration of the project.

If you'd like to get involved with this project next year, please get in touch with Steve at curlwsj@comcast.net or Sue at suecass@comcast.net.

2011 Burrowing Owl volunteers:

Linda Andes-Georges, Linda Berti, Julia Bond, Barbara Brandt, Kerrie Bryan, Ryan Carpenter, Sue Cass, Boulder County Nature Association (volunteer coordinator), Charley Chase, A. D. Chesley, Karen Clark, Jen Clink, Holly DeVaul, Martin Gerra, Sallie Greenwood, Bob Grossman, Renée Haip, Paula Hansley, Scott Harvey, Phyllis Hasheider, Brinda Hensley, Leslie Hopf, Stephen Jones, Boulder County Audubon (compiler), Elena Klaver, Peter Kleinman, Carolyn Kuban, Catherine Labio, Lark Latch, Sandra Laursen, Maureen Lawry, David Lucas, Joe Lupfer, Petrea Mah, Janet MacLachlan, Jim McKee, Carol McCasland, Ruth McCarrison, Jean Morgan, Tina Nielsen, Steve Noud, George Oetzel, Marti Oetzel, Beccy Pem, Joe Pem, Chris Petrizzo, Tom Skinas, Tim Smock, Joel Such, Marcel Such, Oak Thorne, Alan Vajda, Kevin Winseck, Kristi Winseck, Lysa Wegman-French, Mort Wegman-French, Howard Witkin.

Volunteer Aquatic Bird Monitors Needed

Volunteers will help monitor nesting and migration information for City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks department.

City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) is recruiting volunteers with experience in bird identification to monitor waterfowl, shorebirds and other aquatic bird species on OSMP. Because this monitoring information will be used to inform management decisions, individuals familiar with local avian species, including waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds are preferred.

After field and data-entry training, volunteers will be assigned a monitoring site. So far, 5 monitoring sites on OSMP have been identified. Interested volunteers should have some knowledge and skills in local wildlife species identification, enjoy working in the outdoors in all types of weather, and possess the ability to maintain computer records.

OSMP asks that individuals commit for at least one year of involvement in the project, with the goal of establishing this as a long-term monitoring project. Boulder County Parks and Open Space has been managing a similar volunteer effort at 4 sites for the past 3 years, so it would be beneficial to expand the project area to include OSMP water bodies.

Volunteers who are selected will collect data at least twice monthly, and will be able to work in early morning hours.

To learn more about this opportunity, contact Will Keeley, OSMP Wildlife Ecologist, at 720-564-2085 or keeleyw@bouldercolorado.gov

Ducks in the Waste Water Treatment Plant! Are They Safe?

Early in December of 2010 five hearty souls set out to see if the ducks seen flying into the Boulder Sewage Treatment Plant were being stressed or dying in greater numbers than those who do not use the treatment plant. To accomplish this goal, they monitored the number and species of ducks at 5 locations in the plant and in 2 locations on nearby Boulder Creek. Every Monday morning and every Monday afternoon until mid-March they counted and counted. Some days were a balmy 60 degrees and some were minus 3 with sleet and snow. They also checked with treatment plant officials who noted and reported any dead or stressed ducks they found in the tanks at the plant.

In the end there was no duck mortality during this study period! The largest numbers of ducks observed were American Wigeons and Mallards who seem to use the plant as a food source when other sources are scarce and as open water when the creek and ponds are frozen. A few Northern Shovelers showed up in the plant from time to time as did Gadwall and Wood Ducks. During early migration Ring-necked Ducks and Common Golden Eye were observed in the plant but not on the open areas of the creek. Other probable migrators were Common and Hooded Mergansers who joined Canada Geese, Great Blue Heron, Black Crowned Night Heron, Red Tailed Hawks, Ferruginous Hawks and Bald Eagles around the "spa" that formed where the warm effluent from the plant flowed into Boulder Creek.

Many thanks to Chris Douville, Waster Water Plant coordinator and his staff, the City of Boulder Parks representatives and Will Keeley for wildlife monitoring input. And of course thanks to our hearty Audubon volunteers, J.D. Birchmeier, Joan Dawson, Steve Jones, Petrea Mah and Cara Stiles for protecting the health and safety of our ducks.

- Petrea Mah



Northern Shovelers—© Bill Schmoker

Feral Cat Colonies and Rabies Risk

(Washington, D.C., September 21, 2011) Feral cat colonies bring together a series of high risk elements that result in a 'perfect storm' of rabies exposure, according to Steve Holmer, senior policy analyst at American Bird Conservancy.

Managed cat colonies are becoming common in most major U.S. cities and are usually operated by volunteers who like to feed cats, rely on a scheme called Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR), whereby cats are trapped, neutered, and then returned to the outdoors. Unfortunately, these cats are often not vaccinated against rabies. Even when they are vaccinated when first trapped, re-trapping cats to revaccinate can be problematic as the cats become wary of the traps. There is also typically not the funding or infrastructure among the colony feeders to repeatedly re-trap cats to administer vaccines.

Peer reviewed studies have shown that over time, cat colonies increase in size, the result of the inability to neuter or spay all the cats and the dumping of unwanted cats at the colony sites by callous pet owners. The result is a large number of unvaccinated cats.

"While cats make up a small percentage of rabies vectors, they are responsible for a disproportionate number of human exposures," said Holmer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most people are exposed to rabies due to close contact with domestic animals such as cats and dogs. Although dogs historically posed a greater rabies threat to humans, dog-related incidents have become less frequent in recent decades, dropping from 1,600 cases in 1958 to just 75 in 2008. Meanwhile, cases involving cats have increased over the same period with spikes of up to 300 cases in a single year.

American Bird Conservancy media release 9/21/2011

<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/110921.html>



Indoor cat birdwatcher

Grocery Certificates

Marti Oetzel is now our coupon sales person.

Certificates are 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

Petey the Prairie Dog Storms South Dakota

Boulder County Audubon's popular "Prairie Saga" puppet show, created by Maureen Lawry and performed at local schools and festivals with the assistance of education co-chair Mary Balzer, recently hit the road for South Dakota. Accompanied by assistant puppeteer Kara Krasner, Maureen performed the show seven times in late September at Badlands National Park and two area elementary schools.

The performances, sponsored by The Prairie Dog Coalition, Badlands National Park, and Boulder County Audubon, received rave reviews from attendees, who ranged in age from 5 to 11. At the end of one show, the children cried out, "Don't stop!" During a performance at an elementary school on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the appearance of hawk, coyote, and rattlesnake puppets evoked excited whispers and exclamations from the kids.

Maureen wondered how children of local ranchers attending a rural elementary school in Wall, South Dakota, would react to a puppet show starring prairie dogs. When the principal had little to say after the performance, her fears intensified. Even worse, when she and Kara returned to their lodgings in the park, they were told the principal had called up, saying, "I need to speak to the park superintendent." Maureen breathed a sigh of relief when she heard his words: "Thank you so much, the kids loved the show. They were still talking about it for hours afterward."

Written comments from the kids' post-performance evaluation forms included:

- "It was funny, don't change a thing."
- "I didn't like it, I loved it!"
- "It wasn't that good."
- "I learned about the Keystone and how it works."
- "I learned that prairie dogs can do kung fu."



Petey with an Owl in "Prairie Saga"

While staying at the park, Maureen and Kara joined in an unforgettable late-night black-footed ferret spotlighting field trip, partially on foot. Not only did they see ferrets "dancing" sinuously atop their burrows, but they also encountered night-roaming coyotes and porcupines. As they were driving back at 3 a. m. on a deserted country road, Maureen, Kara, and their driver found themselves surrounded by a stomping and snorting bison herd.

"It was like a dream, with the bison cows and calves all around us and moving through our headlights," Maureen said.

The park has invited Maureen and Kara back for a few weeks or months as "puppeteers in residence." They're planning to return to the park next spring to share the "Prairie Saga"--including the keystone role that prairie dogs play in grassland ecosystems--with hundreds of more children. Maureen also hopes to involve drama students at the reservation high school in producing shadow puppet shows depicting Lakota creation stories.

- Steve Jones



Rubber Dodo Award

The [Center for Biological Diversity](#) named the U.S. Chamber of Commerce the recipient of its 2011 Rubber Dodo Award. The award is given annually to those who have done the most to drive endangered species extinct.

"The U.S. Chamber of Commerce gets the 2011 Rubber Dodo award for shamelessly shilling for corporations that pollute our air, dirty our water, ruin our climate and wipe out endangered species habitat," said Kierán Suckling, executive director of the Center.

Previous winners include former BP CEO Tony Hayward (2010), massive land speculator Michael Winer (2009), Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin (2008) and Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne (2007).

BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, MARCH AND APRIL 2011

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

March saw the arrival of several spring migrants, as well as the lingering of some winter species. Altogether 108 bird species were seen in March, a very respectable total for the month. New arrivals included **Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, American White Pelican, Great Egret, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Say's Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Rock Wren, Western Bluebird, Yellow-headed Blackbird** and **Brown-headed Cowbird**. None of these arrivals are particularly noteworthy by themselves, but together, made a remarkably good showing for the end of March. Shorebird migration seemed to have started early with the arrival of **American Avocet**, both **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs** and **Long-billed Dowitcher** by the end of the month. Gull numbers had decreased significantly from February, but did see the arrival of both **Bonaparte's** and **Franklin's Gulls**. The most unusual birds were the **Golden-crowned Sparrow** still wintering at the Teller Lakes Farm trailhead, a **Barrow's Goldeneye** at Walden Ponds and a **Chihuahuan Raven**. **Long-eared Owl** is always a good sighting at any time of year. One **American Tree Sparrow** was reported on the 1st; this is almost certainly the last sighting of this species for the winter. A **Porcupine** was an exciting addition to the mammal list; it has been several years since this species was last reported.

April 2011 was a good month for birders with 164 bird species seen. While this does not rival the 179 species seen in 2008, it is still a very respectable total. There were several rarities reported. The rarest bird of the month was probably a **Hudsonian Godwit** seen on Boulder Reservoir. This is a first sighting for Boulder County, although one was seen on Union Reservoir in Weld County in 2008. Another exciting species was a **Yellow-throated Warbler** found on the eastern part of the Boulder Creek path. This was the fourth time that this bird has been reported since the wildlife inventory began in 1979. Fortunately it stayed around for several days so many were able to add it to their county lists. Ironically, this bird was found by birders looking in the same area for an almost-as-unusual **Yellow-throated Vireo**; this bird had previously been reported five times. Far fewer birders managed to observe the vireo. Another rarity was a **Sedge Wren** found near Boulder Reservoir; this also was a fourth report for the inventory. Yet another fourth report for the inventory was **Chestnut-collared Longspur** seen in the grasslands near Mesa Reservoir. This is a bird that seems to be making a possible comeback.

Both **Snow Goose** and **Ross's Goose** were reported. Duck numbers, particularly diving ducks, were beginning to decrease. Six **Broad-winged Hawks** were observed; I am unsure whether these are actually becoming commoner or people are more readily identifying them. Shorebird migration was certainly present, but did not seem to be particularly noteworthy. Warbler migration was going strong by the end of the month with less usual species being **Northern Parula, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Palm Warbler** and **Hooded Warbler**. **Black-throated Sparrow** and **Sage Sparrow** are two of our less usual sparrows. The **Golden-crowned Sparrow** continued to be seen at the Teller Lakes Farm trailhead.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MARCH AND APRIL 2011 INVENTORIES

Linda Andes-Georges, Bob Andrews, Gary Baxley, Alan Bell, Maria Bertilsson, J D Birchmeier, Kitty Brigham, Alex & Gillian Brown, Deb Carstensen, Brian Cassell, Carol Cushman, Todd Deininger, Ted Floyd, Lonny Frye, Steve Frye, Peter Gent, Paula Hansley, Katie Hill Renga, Pat Hoadley, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Elena Klaver, James Lamoureux, Steve Larson, Mary Leonard, Norm Lewis, Carol McCasland, Steve Miodinow, Gene and Lynn Monroe, Betty Naughton, Donna Nespoli, Sharon Norfleet, Rudi Nissl, Christian Nunes, Laura Osborn, Beth Partin, Greg Pasquariello, Nathan Pieplow, Pam Piombino, Peter Ruprecht, Bill Schmoker, Tim Smart, Debra Sparn, Bob Spencer, Cara Stiles, Joyce Takamine, Richard Taylor, Oakleigh Thorne, Peggy Wait, David J Waltman, Tom Wilberding, Cole Wild, Wild Bird Center, Howard Witkin.

BCAS Hog Island Teen Birding Camp Scholarship

For the second year, Boulder County Audubon is offering a full scholarship enabling a 15-17-year-old to attend the June 17-22 Hog Island Teen Audubon Camp off the coast of Maine. Ken Kaufman, Scott Weidensaul and other luminaries will be on hand to help the participants observe, photograph, and band puffins, terns, gulls, and other coastal species. The scholarship covers tuition and room and board at the Crow's Roost Lodge, along with \$500 in travel expenses.

For more information or to apply, [visit this BCAS Web page](#).

BCAS Nest Box Monitoring

2011 was the seventh year for the current BCAS monitoring of nest boxes in Boulder County. We started in 2005 with 45 boxes, all located on four trails at Walker Ranch. Trails have gradually been added at other County Open Space properties (Betasso, Heil Ranch, and Bald Mountain) and in Boulder OSMP properties Shanahan Ridge and Eldorado Mountain. There were 11 active trails this year.

Although it's often referred to as a bluebird program, several other species also use the boxes. The goal of the program is for every box to be checked and data recorded approximately weekly from May through July.

As the table shows, results vary considerably from year to year. There are always some boxes that remain unused, while others will have two nests, the second after chicks have fledged from the first. In both 2008 and 2009, favorable weather allowed an early start to the nesting season, so there were many cases in which the same pair were able to produce two clutches of chicks in one box. In 2010 and 2011, the weather was less favorable in the early season. In addition, there was more predation of boxes in the 2010 season than we have seen in any other year, apparently due to snakes.

Thanks to Susan Spaulding, BCPOS coordinator for enabling this project. Thanks also to Michelle Durant of BCPOS and to Will Keeley and Christian Nunes of Boulder OSMP for their support and nest box checks. Finally, thanks to the volunteer monitors who gathered data, and who identified and resolved some problems, helping more chicks to fledge than without their attention.

Chris & Deb Abrahamson, Ron Baird, J. D. Birchmeyer, Cathy Comstock, Catherine Labio, Dave Lucas, George Mah, George & Marti Oetzel, Sue Olmsted, Dick Pratt, Janie Stuart, Neal & Elain Thielen

Thanks also go to J. D. (Birch) Birchmeyer for building and repairing many nest boxes in this and several previous seasons.

- George & Marti Oetzel

Walker Ranch/Meyers Gulch Management

Seven years of nest monitoring at Walker Ranch have given numerous volunteers a special opportunity to appreciate the wildlife and other values of that area. The Meyers Gulch Homestead trail, in particular, is currently appealing to older hikers, families with young children, and nature lovers. The wide, relatively short, out and back trail is less appealing to other user groups and creates a de facto separation of users that is unusual in Boulder County. We believe it is important in the management plan to recognize and preserve these values.

Further recommendations:

- Fire Road #3, which connects the Homestead Trail to Flagstaff Road should remain closed to mountain bikes. Such traffic would impact sensitive species such as Dusky Grouse, Wild Turkeys, black bears, and bobcats that are frequently spotted in that area. Better signage is needed to make clear that mountain biking is only permitted on the main trail.
- All lateral trails and fire roads branching off the main trail should be closed during the nesting season, 1 May – 1 August. Dogs should not be allowed on these trails at any time of year.
- Dogs should not be allowed to accompany bikes or horses, as the required leash poses a hazard to other trail users. In addition, it also allows dogs to roam far from the trail, negatively impacting wildlife and the natural environment generally.

It is important that people concerned with maintaining the environmental values at Meyers Gulch communicate those concerns with Susan Spaulding (sspaulding@bouldercounty.org) and Jesse Rounds (jrounds@bouldercounty.org) of Boulder County Parks and Open Space. Comments can also be submitted on the BCPOS Web Site. (<http://www.bouldercounty.org/live/environment/land/pages/walkerplan.aspx>)

Thanks to Laura Osborn (losborn@indra.com) for her contributions as an ecosteward at Meyers Gulch.

Year (#Nest Boxes) Species	2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Nests	Fledged	Nests	Fledged	Nests	Fledged	Nests	Fledged
Western Bluebird	56	238	67	262	38	96	49	182
Mountain Bluebird	30	95	20	68	18	68	15	62
Tree Swallow	5	20	7	20	4	3	2	6
Violet-green Swallow	7	20	10	27	5	12	7	21
Mountain Chickadee	1	7	0	0	2	7	4	19
White-breasted Nuthatch	5	12	0	0	8	21	7	37
Pygmy Nuthatch	12	23	0	0	4	10	0	0
House Wren	0	0	2	4	2	0	2	13
Total	116	415	106	381	81	217	86	340

Berkeley Earth Releases Global Land Warming Analysis

Global warming is real, according to a major study released Oct 20. Despite issues raised by climate change skeptics, the Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature study finds reliable evidence of a rise in the average world land temperature of approximately 1.8 °F since the mid-1950s.

Analyzing temperature data from 15 sources, in some cases going as far back as 1800, the Berkeley Earth study directly addressed scientific concerns raised by skeptics, including the urban heat island effect, poor station quality, and the risk of data selection bias.

On the basis of its analysis, according to Berkeley Earth's founder and scientific director, Professor Richard A. Muller, the group concluded that earlier studies based on more limited data by teams in the United States and Britain had accurately estimated the extent of land surface warming.

"Our biggest surprise was that the new results agreed so closely with the warming values published previously by other teams in the U.S. and the U.K.," Muller said. "This confirms that these studies were done carefully and that potential biases identified by climate change skeptics did not seriously affect their conclusions."

Prof. Muller published a paper in 2004 in the [MIT Technology Review](#) questioning the analysis that led to the "hockey stick" plot of global temperature change and has been widely quoted by climate change skeptics. Four scientific papers setting out conclusions of the study have been submitted for peer review and will form part of the literature for the next IPCC report on Climate Change. They can be seen on the [Berkeley Earth site](#).

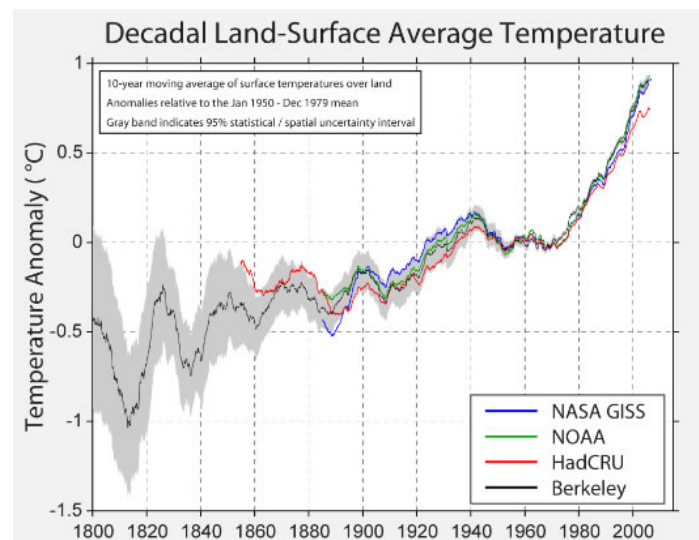
Conclusions include:

- The urban heat island effect is locally large and real, but does not contribute significantly to the average land temperature rise. That's because the urban regions of the Earth amount to less than 1% of the land area.
- About 1/3 of temperature sites around the world reported global cooling over the past 70 years (including much of the United States and northern Europe). But 2/3 of the sites show warming. Individ-

ual temperature histories reported from a single location are frequently noisy and/or unreliable, and it is always necessary to compare and combine many records to understand the true pattern of global warming.

- Stations ranked as "poor" in a survey by Anthony Watts and his team of the most important temperature recording stations in the U.S., (known as the USHCN -- the US Historical Climatology Network), showed the same pattern of global warming as stations ranked "OK". Absolute temperatures of poor stations may be higher and less accurate, but the overall global warming trend is the same, and the Berkeley Earth analysis concludes that there is not any undue bias from including poor stations in the survey.

The figure below is from the paper "[Decadal Variations in the Global Atmospheric Land Temperatures](#)" which is one of the four available from the Berkeley Earth site. The gray areas show the annual variations prior to computing the decadal averages.



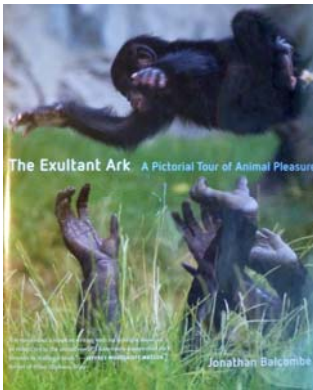
What Berkeley Earth has not done is make an independent assessment of how much of the observed warming is due to human actions, Richard Muller acknowledged.

Much of this article is quoted from the Berkeley Earth press release (http://www.berkeleypress.org/Resources/Berkeley_Earth_Summary_20_Oct)

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, usually includes extra articles.



The Exultant Ark: A Pictorial Tour of Animal Pleasure

By Jonathan Balcombe

University of California
Press, 2011

ISBN 978-0-520-26024-5

From the Introduction:

"I argue throughout this book that pleasure is central to animal existence. Believe it or not, this is a controversial claim. There has been very little discussion of animal pleasure by biologists. Consult the index of an animal behavior textbook and you almost certainly will not find the word *pleasure*."

He describes, with wonderful illustrations, various sources of apparent animal pleasure—play, food, touch, courtship and sex, love, comfort, and companionship—that are analogous to human pleasures. He argues that there is nothing wrong with these anthropomorphic descriptions of animal behavior, provided we are judicious about them. One reviewer's well-stated opinion:

"It is rare to find a scientist writing with such delight about, of all things, joy in the animal world! I have rarely experienced such pleasure in reading a book. I recommend it to all animal lovers, and even challenge a few skeptics, whose minds may be changed by this extraordinary work."--Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, author of *When Elephants Weep*.

- George & Marti Oetzel

From the Cornell E-News Oct 26:

Watch the Only Known Footage of Imperial Woodpecker

In a new study published in *The Auk*, Cornell Lab scientists have analyzed the only known footage of the Imperial Woodpecker. It was the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's closest relative and is now probably extinct. Filmed in 1956 by William L. Rhein in Mexico, the footage shows a female Imperial Woodpecker hitching up the trunks of Durango pines, her extraordinary crest of feathers curving overhead, shaking as she chips at the bark with her bill. [See the footage and more in All About Birds article.](#)



Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth

Following the failure of the Copenhagen Summit, the Bolivian government organized an alternative conference for communities, NGOs, lawyers, academics, scientists and governments, from around the world, in Cochabamba, Bolivia, coinciding with Mother Earth Day on April 22nd 2010. Nearly 35,000 people participated from 140 countries, and they adopted a "[Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth](#)", which recognizes Earth as a living being with rights to life.

In preparation for International Earth Day April 22, 2011, United Nations diplomats set aside international peace talks for a day to discuss the creation of a U.N. treaty that would grant the same rights found in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" to Mother Nature.

The Bolivian "Law of Mother Earth" establishes 11 new rights for nature. They include: the right to life and to exist; the right to continue vital cycles and processes free from human alteration; the right to pure water and clean air; the right to balance; the right not to be polluted; and the right to not have cellular structure modified or genetically altered. Controversially, it will also enshrine the right of nature "to not be affected by mega-infrastructure and development projects that affect the balance of ecosystems and the local inhabitant communities". It makes world history.

There are also dozens of local ordinances (laws) in the United States which acknowledge the legal rights of natural communities and ecosystems to 'exist and flourish'; which recognize self-governance of communities; and which deny the personhood of corporations if they engage in ecologically and socially destructive activities. These ordinances give residents the tools to fight for the environment in court.

International Earth Day is now coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network, and is celebrated in more than 175 countries every year. The next Earth Day celebration is April 22, 2012.

The board of BCAS is very concerned with protecting wildlife from habitat loss and fragmentation resulting from the common attitude that "I should be able to use Open Space as I please, without regard for the wildlife". A recent example is the proposed bike trail on Anemone Hill, which, fortunately, was defeated by the Boulder City Council. We might start with a proposed draft ordinance to City Council specifically stating the right "for every naturally-occurring vertebrate species to exist on our Open Space."

- Kitty Brigham