



# On The Wing

Volume 45 Number 3 Boulder County Audubon Society Newsletter

Sept.-Oct. 2015

## BCAS 4th Tuesday Program Series

September 22, 7:15 PM

Bob and Cindy Maynard:

### "A Photographers Guide to Colorado Natl. Parks and Monuments"

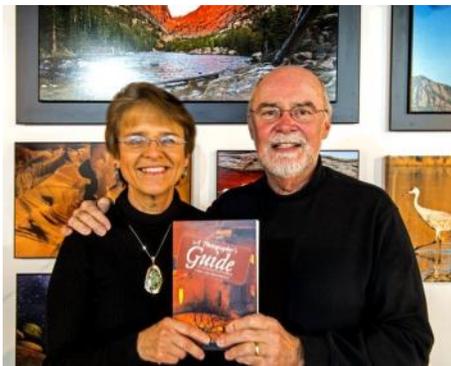


Photo courtesy of Bob Maynard

Few states offer the range of geography and topography that Colorado does. The state's scenic locations draw millions of visitors, most hoping to document their visit in photographs.

Are you interested in photography? Do you love Colorado's National Parks and Monuments? Join author and naturalist Cindy Maynard and professional photographer Bob Maynard, who will share their extensive personal experience, entertaining anecdotes, and a selection of Bob's photographs.

Their new book, **A Photographer's Guide to Colorado's National Parks and Monuments**, offers tips and advice for photographers who wish to do their own exploring and be in the right place, at the right time, with the right lens.

Bob Maynard is an award-winning photographer. He has been exploring the Colorado Rockies and the desert southwest since 1969, having accumulated over 1400 photo credits.

Cindy Maynard is an experienced naturalist with an extensive background teaching and writing about the natural world. Her descriptions of the unique character of each park will enhance your appreciation of the features and wonders that make each one a unique treasure.

October 27, 7:15 PM

### Eric DeFonso: "Birds of Brazil's Mata Atlantico"

During several months as a volunteer bird guide at the Reserva Ecológica de Guapiaçu in southeastern Brazil, Eric absorbed the wonders of the rich bird life and unique ecology of the Mata Atlântica, the Atlantic Rainforest. He'll share stories of his discoveries, along with the enormous challenges and heartening successes of forest conservation being pursued by staff and volunteers at the reserve.

Eric is a certified Master Naturalist for the City of Fort Collins, served on the Board of Directors for Fort Collins Audubon, and worked as a volunteer educational bird handler at the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program. Currently he works as a seasonal field biologist for the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. His nature sound recordings can be heard online at [xeno-canto.org](http://xeno-canto.org) and at the website for Cornell's Macaulay Library of Natural Sound. <http://regua.org/biodiversity/birds/>



Photo of a Green-headed Tanager © Dario Sanches, Cornell Lab of Ornithology Neotropical Birds

Program Meetings are held at Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder, 5001 Pennsylvania Ave. (west off 55th St. between Arapahoe and Baseline). Join us at 7:00 pm for socializing; programs begin at 7:15 pm.

**2015-2016 Fall/Winter Field Trips sponsored****by Boulder County Audubon Society****WHITE ROCKS NATURE PRESERVE**

Saturday, September 12, 2015, 7 a.m.-10 a.m. Free

Limited to 15. Reservations: [piombino.pam@gmail.com](mailto:piombino.pam@gmail.com)

Join two superb leaders, **Lynne Sullivan** and **Christian Nunes**, for BCAS's annual trip to White Rocks Nature Preserve. This informative walk will cover topics such as history, geology, botany, and birds. Lynne and Christian will explain how Ricky Weiser's stewardship of the land enabled it to remain a high quality, intact floodplain and the benefits to local flora and fauna.

**RABBIT MOUNTAIN**

Friday, Oct. 9, 8- 11 a.m. Free, no limit.

Leader: **Carl Starace**. Carl knows this area intimately and will lead the group in a quest for both winter resident species and migrants. Rock and Canyon wrens often sing their dawn songs, while various raptors soar overhead. This is a great place to see flocks of the "birds that fly with the sky on their backs," Mountain Bluebirds. Sage Thrashers often pass through, and there is always a surprise or two.

**WALDEN PONDS**

Saturday, Oct. 24, 8:30-? Free, no limit

Leader, **Richard Pautsch**: By October, the ducks have molted out of their dull eclipse plumages and are resplendent in their new breeding feathers. Boulder County is blessed with a great variety of this order of avifauna and the Walden Ponds complex is one of the best places to view them. Bring your cameras and scopes! Meet at the parking lot at Walden Ponds, off of 75<sup>th</sup> Street in Boulder.

**RARE DIVERS OF THE EASTERN PLAINS**

Saturday, Nov. 14, 2015, 7:30-5:00, Free/no limit, but you must carpool.

Leader: The one and only **Bill Kaempfer**. Mid-November is the peak of migration for some of the more unusual waterfowl found along the northern Front Range. This trip will explore a wide region, ranging from Boulder to Barr Lake, perhaps even to Jackson Reservoir State Park in a search for Scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Greater Scaup, Barrow's Goldeneye, Common, Red-throated and Pacific Loons, and Red-necked Grebe. While we certainly won't see all of those rarities, we will see some. But how many?

We will meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Park-n-ride at the Diagonal (CO 119) and Niwot Road to arrange carpooling. A State Park Pass is a good idea for those who will be driving as we are likely to end up at a Colorado State Park at some point. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear and bring sunscreen, water, and lunch. Expect to return before 5:00 p.m. To reserve a spot on this trip, please email Bill Kaempfer at [Kaempfer@Colorado.edu](mailto:Kaempfer@Colorado.edu).

**Boulder County Audubon Society****President**

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**Conservation contact**

*Ray Bridge (303-499-8496), and any*

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**Teen Naturalists**

*Steve Jones*

**Wildlife Inventory**

*Alex & Gillian Brown (303-494-3042)*

*On the Wing © 2015*

*Boulder County Audubon Society*

**Next issue deadline:**

**Nov. issue—Oct. 15**

Contact editor via link at: [www.boulderaudubon.org/newsletter.htm](http://www.boulderaudubon.org/newsletter.htm)

## **2015-2016 Fall/Winter Field Trips sponsored by Boulder County Audubon Society** **BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE CU MUSEUM ORNITHOLOGY COLLECTION**

Thursday, December 3, 2015 10 a.m. Free

Limited to 12. Reservations: [piombino.pam@gmail.com](mailto:piombino.pam@gmail.com)

Leader: CU Collections Manager **Emily Baker**

The CU Museum Ornithology Collection maintains more than 12,000 preserved bird skins, taxidermy mounts, and skeletal specimens, as well as over 2,250 egg sets and nests. The collection is global in scope, housing avifauna from 38 countries with particular emphasis on North American and Colorado species. Several iconic extinct species such as Passenger Pigeons and Carolina Parakeets as well as extirpated, threatened, endangered, and Type specimens can be found in the cabinets. Assembled beginning in the mid-nineteenth century by pioneer naturalists Charles E. Aiken and Denis Gale and growing annually, the collection has served as an invaluable resource for students, community members, and researchers past and present.

### **2015 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015. Free/Start time depends on if you go out early for owls.

"116th National Audubon Christmas Bird Count" (CBC)

The Boulder Circle of the CBC, sponsored by Boulder County Audubon, will hold its 74th count on December 20th. All skill levels are welcome to join teams and help the leaders by contributing their spotting and identification skills. More experienced folks are urged to lead a small group to cover a specific area within the count circle. Anything can happen (both weather and wildlife) and it usually does. If you prefer, you can also stay at home and count at your feeder, while sipping mulled wine and munching toasties.

Following a full day in the field (for most of us), we celebrate together with a warm and jolly compilation supper at the clubhouse at the Villa del Prado, 635 Mohawk Dr., Boulder, starting at 4:30pm. Boulder County Audubon will provide a vegetarian chili, corn bread, and wine. We ask participants to bring potluck appetizers, salads, and desserts. **We also ask that you please bring your own dishware to use; otherwise, we ask that you donate \$1, which will go to Boulder Audubon.** Please contact Bill Schmoker ([bill.schmoker@gmail.com](mailto:bill.schmoker@gmail.com)), the coordinator of this event, which has compiled the largest database for resident North American birds.

### **WINTER SOLSTICE SUNRISE HIKE**

Tuesday, December 22, 7 AM, Free, limited to 25

Join us for our 29th annual Winter Solstice sunrise hike on the White Rocks Trail, featuring glistening hoarfrost, exuberant flocks of waterfowl, soaring raptors, and soul-stirring fellowship. If you'd like, bring a poem or small thought to share during a short solstice ceremony on the Boulder Creek footbridge. Breakfast at Garden Gate Café in Niwot follows at 9. Limited to 25 participants. To register contact Steve Jones, and please specify whether you are planning to stay for breakfast: [curlwsj@comcast.net](mailto:curlwsj@comcast.net)

### **WHEAT RIDGE GREENBELT**

Saturday, January 23, 7:30-11:30 AM, Free, no limit

Leader, Steve Jones: In winter, the hike/bike trail along Clear Creek east of Golden offers a unique opportunity to see native duck species in their winter habitats (thanks to the Coors Brewing Company and the productive citizens of Golden). Bring your binoculars and/or cameras and meet at the Eldorado Springs "park and ride" (the gravel parking lot on the northeast corner of the South Broadway and Eldorado Springs Drive intersection) at 7:30 a.m. Dress warmly, as it can be foggy and frigid along the creek. Reservations: Steve ([curlwsj@comcast.net](mailto:curlwsj@comcast.net); 303-579-3620)



*Hooded merganser pair in Clear Creek, January.  
 (Photo courtesy of Stephen Jones)*

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

**Tu., Nov.24, 2015**

**Holiday Sale and**

**Program with Rob Palmer!!**

**"Encounters with Owls and Other Raptors"**

**Sale 5:30PM to 7:15PM/8:30 to 9PM**

**Unitarian Universalist Church,**

**5001 Pennsylvania Ave., Boulder**

## Boulder County Audubon Environmental Awards 2015

### Jan Chu: Lifetime Achievement Award

By Pam Piombino



Most of us know Jan as the “butterfly lady,” an association that is well deserved. Her passion for these exquisite creatures started almost 40 years ago, when she met renowned lepidopterist Robert Pyle while teaching at the Y camp in Estes Park, where she ran the Ranger Rick club for the National Wildlife Federation.

Jan’s love of the natural world came early, as her mother was a nurse and her father a high school biology teacher, who believed in exposing his students to more than dry book lectures. The family would take off in their woody station wagon for long tours of national parks and monuments. In fact, Jan was so comfortable outside as a young teenager that she spent two weeks at a Campfire Girls camp in Iowa, where she later became a counselor (Johnnie Nature).

After becoming a biology teacher, Jan graduated from Antioch and landed her first job at Boulder High in 1965. Soon afterwards, the principal informed her that his students were not allowed outside. She resolved to leave that position and jumped over to Fairview High, where she found a more enlightened attitude and taught there for 30 years. While there, she became Assistant Principal and initiated the International Baccalaureate program.

Jan was integral to the establishment of the Cal-Wood Education Center and still sits on its Board of Directors. It is on that species-rich property that she organizes the annual 4th of July butterfly count, analogous to our CBC. Children are included and her patience with these budding naturalists is astounding. Jan started working on surveying butterflies in Boulder and the surrounding county as early as 1978. She participated in a 10-year study of Lepidoptera in RMNP. She was the first to begin documenting the habitats, nectar sources, and diversity of the Lepidoptera here. She continues to monitor butterfly populations on Boulder County Open Space, for whom she has produced annual reports for the past 13 years. Despite her elegant demeanor, Jan is an amazing athlete in the field, always the first one down the rockiest gullies and up the steepest hills, to make sure all potential habitats are thoroughly covered.

Among her many accolades are: Outstanding Biology Teacher, from the National Association of Biology Teachers; the Amgen Company Award for Outstanding Science Teaching, which included a hefty sum of money, all of which she donated to IB, Fairview, and Cal-Wood; and the 2012 Pacesetter Award, bestowed by the Boulder Daily Camera. She is on the High Country Lepidopterists Planning Committee, active in the National Lepidopterist Society, and has presented papers to both of these esteemed organizations. Jan is well respected by the elite in this field of science, including Paul Opler, Robert Pyle, and Ray Stanford.

Jan continues to teach butterfly classes for Boulder County Nature Association, through which she and Steve Jones published *Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range*. Since 1965, she has been a member of the Boulder Bird Club, as well as a member of BCAS. As her dear friend Jean Morgan insists, Jan’s last breath will be drawn to identify a butterfly for a novice. It has been an honor and a privilege to have her as a member of both BCAS and the broader scientific community.

### Steve Jones: Lifetime Achievement Award

By Ray Bridge

It could be fairly said, without dispute, that Steve Jones is a born naturalist and teacher. He taught for seven years at Southern Hills Junior High School and for 25 years as a part-time Adult Basic Education instructor, helping more than 2000 adults from 80 countries study for and receive American high school diplomas; he has remained a challenging and innovative teacher for all ages, while continuing his commitment to young people as the mainstay for Boulder Audubon Society’s Young Naturalist program. Many BCAS members, if polled, would name him as their mentor in learning to better appreciate the natural world, even if they started out with the intention of becoming simple “birdwatchers.”

Above all, Steve has been the most visible face for the major nature associations in Boulder County: the Boulder County Audubon Society, the Boulder County Nature Association, and, most recently, Boulder Rights of Nature. For all of them, Steve has provided inspiring leadership, and he has been a tireless workhorse for day-to-day tasks. To the extent that these organizations are vibrant and functional today, it is due in no small part to Steve’s efforts.

(cont. next page)



## Boulder County Audubon Environmental Awards 2015 (cont.)

### Steve Jones: Lifetime Achievement Award

At the same time, Steve has become the pre-eminent authority on our wildlife and ecosystems, and the resource to whom our planning departments address their first inquiries when the conservation of natural habitats is at stake. He has contributed enormously to our understanding: devising, supervising, and promoting citizen-science projects in addition to his own notable contributions as a consultant, advisor, and occasional (reluctant) member of citizen management planning committees.

Steve is also unfailingly generous in sharing his knowledge, as everyone who has been on a field trip or in a class with him can attest. He is encyclopedic in his knowledge of our ecosystems, deeply analytic, and innovative in sharing his understanding.

In addition, Steve is a remarkable photographer and author. From his *Field Guide to the North American Prairie* with Carol Cushman and the local butterfly guide with Jan Chu to at least three nature almanacs and *The Last Prairie: A Sandhills Journal*, he has informed us and delighted us by evoking the spirit of the wild places he has shown us, while always maintaining impeccable scientific accuracy. Finally, Steve has been an indefatigable and passionate advocate for species and ecosystems in Boulder County and around the world.

### Carol McCasland: Community Conservation Award for Exceptional Volunteerism

#### By Pam Piombino

Five years ago, Carol, who had lived in Texas most of her life and has the accent to prove it, decided that she would prefer to enjoy retirement in Colorado. She packed up and made the big jump to Louisville. In this short time period, she has become one of the most active and dedicated volunteers to ever grace the Front Range.

Currently, her role in Boulder County Audubon is as the B.C.A.S. Treasurer, which is nearly a half-time job. As we have grown and our finances have become more complex, she has tackled many difficult financial issues with competency and unflappable good humor. For this exceptional combination of skills, several of us worship at her feet.

Carol and Brinda Henley organized our very successful silent auction at the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party in 2014, a huge job. Her voice on the Board of Directors is thoughtful, insightful, and always accompanied by an easy laugh.

Further abroad, Carol is a docent at the Denver Zoo, which is the highest of three levels to be achieved in the zoo's very rigorous training protocols. This leaves her free to design her own teaching programs, which she does regularly, with her usual deft sense of humor and imaginative curriculum. She has a particular affinity for orangutans and last year attended the National Conference for Orangutan conservation. Her contributions to our citizen science programs have been significant: she does nest monitoring for the City of Louisville as well as for a bluebird trail; runs a burrowing owl transect, and a winter raptor transect; and she leads tours for County Open Space as a Volunteer Naturalist.

In her spare time, she travels the natural world, visits family in Texas, and is one of the two women who produce the Boulder County Nature Association newsletter. No one-theme-performer, Carol has also been active in Boulder Newcomers as a host for new families and also participates in their book and movie clubs.

We take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge Carol McCasland for the consistently positive, can-do attitude that she brings to BCAS and all of the other organizations that are blessed by her participation. If she says she will do something, it gets done!



Photo courtesy of Linda Andes-Georges

Did you know? **Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory** has changed their name to **Bird Conservancy of the Rockies!** Check out their website for more info: <http://www.rmbo.org>



Follow  
Boulder County Audubon  
on Facebook:

<http://tiny.cc/ez7v6>

## Boulder Rights of Nature Film Festival returns!

**Nov. 5-8, Dairy Center for the Performing Arts**

Last year's Boulder Rights of Nature Film Festival, the first rights of nature film festival ever held in the world, generated a buzz that resonated throughout Colorado. More than 500 people attended the five sessions, which included artful and powerful films such as "The Condor's Shadow," "Damnation," and "Heart of Earth, Heart of Sky." In response to our showing of the heartrending film, "Green," festival attendees contributed nearly \$10,000 to support the Sumatra Orangutan Conservation Programme, which is returning dozens of orphaned orangutans to recently protected forests.

Admission: \$12/\$8 students to each film session. Discount vouchers of up to \$8 will be available at the festival welcome desk. Admission to weekend workshops is free.

We'll have the complete schedule on the BCAS and BCNA websites soon!

## BCAS sponsors local Colorado birds in the newest update (Atlas II) of our state census

Last year, in the first quarter of 2014, we gave our first contribution to the COBBAIL for \$500, but we did not designate species to sponsor.

This winter we asked that our funds be directed toward all of these birds, which are rare and declining in Boulder County: **Northern Harrier, American Bittern, Burrowing Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike.**

Later, we agreed to donate an additional \$500 to the COBBAIL. We will be sponsoring these species (all breeders in Boulder County): **Veery, Brown Thrasher, Red-eyed Vireo, Dicksissel, House Finch.**



*Burrowing owl fledglings.*

*(Photo by Gerhard Assenmacher)*

## Alec Wyatt on Hog Island Ornithology

**Camp, Summer 2015**

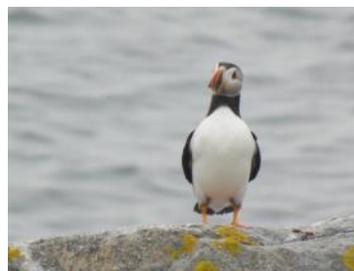
I recently had the privilege of attending the Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens camp on Hog Island, which was an experience made



possible by a generous scholarship from the Boulder County Audubon Society. It is said that spending a week on Hog Island can change a camper's life, and I would not have understood the truth in this if not for the scholarship I received. I am infinitely grateful to have had this opportunity, and I look forward to sharing the joy and the knowledge I gained from my week on the island.

Hog Island is an exciting place to study birds, and the Audubon camp there is a welcoming environment in which to share the experience with others. Upon arriving at the beginning of the week, I was surrounded by dozens of friendly, knowledgeable people. These included fifteen students who were about my age, many of whom also benefitted from a scholarship and all of whom were equally eager to be on the island. Alongside the young campers was a group of kind, committed, and exceptionally qualified staff comprised of many of the foremost authorities in ornithology.

During my week on the island, I attended presentations from Dr. Sara Morris, Dr. Frank Gill, Scott Weidensaul, and Dr. Stephen Kress. I watched songbird banding up-close; observed hundreds of breeding terns, gulls, and puffins from a blind on Eastern Egg Rock; held a downy gull chick and a hatching egg; and met countless birders who became close friends by the end of just one week. I plan to teach others what I learned on Hog Island with the hope that they will be inspired to appreciate and conserve birds just as I am. I would like to thank the Boulder County Audubon Society immensely for helping make this experience a reality.



*Atlantic Puffin near burrow on Eastern Egg Rock. (Photo courtesy of Alexis Fountain and Alec Wyatt)*



## Please remember BCAS on Colorado Gives Day Dec. 08, 2015!

Thank you for your past support, which goes towards our many conservation and education programs, field trips, and more. Giving on this day gives all your Boulder County donations more oomph.

You can donate by credit card; we are entered in fund-boosting lotteries in several ways, and all our county non-profits benefit from the news and internet coverage.

**Thank you!** [www.coloradogives.org](http://www.coloradogives.org)

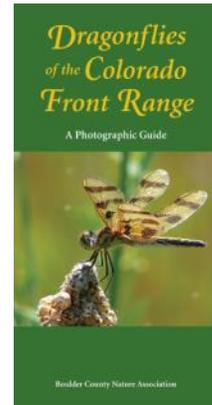
## Celebrating Restored Prairies with Thriving Bird Families

Fifteen Boulder County Audubon and Denver Field Ornithologists volunteers met at Keith Owens' farm on Oxford Road on June 14 to conduct an annual breeding bird survey on his 65 acres of restored prairie. We watched male Broad-tailed Hummingbirds performing death-defying dives while defending their nesting territories; observed Western Meadowlarks feeding grasshoppers to their clucking young; reveled in the sweet songs of Black-headed Grosbeaks and Bullock's Orioles; and walked right by a Barn Owl nest containing several downy chicks.

But the highlight, as every year, was seeing how quickly Keith's former tree farm is transforming into beautiful prairie dominated by native wheatgrasses, needlegrasses, little bluestem, and blue grama. After the bird survey, Keith accompanied us to the Boulder County Audubon Dodd Reservoir Preserve, where we planted 3 acres of native grasses in smooth-brome-dominated prairie just last fall. Though the plot remains sprinkled with weeds--especially prickly lettuce and thistle--we saw lots of native grasses emerging, and Keith reassured us that this is what his prairie plots looked like during their first year. By July native wildflowers were carpeting our prairie at Dodd Reservoir. We look forward to repeating this trip next year, both to celebrate the diverse bird populations at Keith's farm and to see how our prairie restoration project is progressing. For information or to register for next June's trip, contact Petrea Mah ([petreamah@comcast.net](mailto:petreamah@comcast.net)).

—Steve Jones

## Dragonflies of the Colorado Front Range, by Ann Cooper



If you've ever admired a jewel-like dragonfly and wondered what kind it was, then Ann Cooper's *Dragonflies of the Colorado Front Range* is the book for you. More than 70 species of Odonata (the order that includes both dragonflies and damselflies) are shown in dazzling color photographs taken by the author and other local naturalists. A description of each species includes habitat, appearance, size, behavior, look-alikes, and flight season.

Don't skip the introduction as readers so often do. Illustrated by Amy Chu, it includes fascinating general information, such as the unique mating positions of Odonata, as well as tips on watching and photographing these insects that dash and dart about with amazing rapidity. A key to the broad groups of Odonata helps determine whether you are watching a darner or a dancer, a clubtail or a forktail.

The small paperback is easy to use and also easy to take into the field to help with identification of these insects that may even change color depending on temperature and time of day. I own a guide to dragonflies and damselflies of the west that weighs almost 2½ pounds. It's comprehensive, packed with information, but I rarely use it whereas Ann Cooper's guide is beginning to look dog-eared. The big advantage of the smaller book is that it's limited to the Front Range so it features the species we actually see in Boulder County.

Take the book out to Walden Ponds along with a pair of close-focusing binoculars on a hot summer afternoon. (Odonata are most active during hot weather.) As Ann Cooper writes, "Dragonflies are the very essence of summer." You will be amazed at how much having the book in hand will focus your attention and help you become familiar with these jewels that fly.

Published by Boulder County Nature Association in 2014, the book is available at Amazon.com, at the Boulder Wild Bird Company and Arvada and Denver Wild Birds Unlimited stores, and at other nature-oriented stores in the Denver metro area. 111 pages, \$12.95

—Ruth Carol Cushman

**BOULDER COUNTY WILDLIFE INVENTORY, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2014****Gillian and Alex Brown, 4560 Darley Avenue, Boulder, CO 80305**

Both **Trumpeter** and **Tundra Swans** were reported in November, with **Trumpeter Swan** being new for the year. Historically, **Tundra Swan** was far more common than **Trumpeter Swan**, but in recent years both species are possible. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to distinguish between the two species, particularly when they cannot be compared as to size. November is usually the best month of the year for spotting loons. Along with the expected **Common Loons**, were several **Pacific Loons** and a **Red-throated Loon** seen on Union Reservoir. **Red-necked Grebe** was new for the year, as was **White-winged Scoter**. Gulls were well reported with the most unusual species being a **Black-legged Kittiwake** seen on Union Reservoir. This made a total of nine gull species reported including **Mew Gull**, **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and **Glaucous Gull**. The female **Magnificent Hummingbird** seen in October continued to visit a feeder in Coal Creek Canyon until the 11<sup>th</sup> November. Hopefully, it was able to migrate southwards and survive. Two **Say's Phoebe** seen on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup> were very late sightings. A **Palm Warbler** was a new sighting for the year. This is a warbler that, although uncommon, is most often found in November or December. A well-documented **Purple Finch** was found west of Longmont. This is a bird that is hard to identify, and can be confused with both our very common **House Finch** and with **Cassin's Finch**, particularly when the latter irrupt on to the plains. Other species of note include **Ross's Goose**, **Surf Scoter**, **Barrow's Goldeneye**, **Broad-winged Hawk**, **Eastern Bluebird**, the continuing **Golden-crowned Sparrow** and a **White-winged Crossbill**. Altogether 131 bird species were seen in November, making this a record month. The previous record was 125 species seen in November 2006 and November 2012.

The amount of open water in Boulder County throughout December makes a large difference to the number of birds seen. Typically, by mid-month most of the lakes are completely frozen with only Valmont Reservoir, which is heated by the power plant, and streams with a good flow still open. This year the Boulder Christmas Bird Count took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> which is relatively early, and correspondingly there was more open water than usual. Thus ducks were well reported with **Greater Scaup**, **White-winged Scoter** and **Barrow's Goldeneye** being some of the less usual species. Five species of geese were reported: **Greater White-fronted**, **Snow**, **Ross's**, **Cackling** and **Canada Goose**. Both **Trumpeter** and **Tundra Swans** were observed. Gulls were well reported with **Iceland Gull** being new for the year. Other new sightings for the year were **Chihuahuan Raven**, **Lapland Longspur** and **Eastern Towhee**. A **Pine Warbler** was an exciting December find, this is a warbler that is most often seen in the winter. All three species of **Rosy Finch**, **Gray-crowned**, **Black** and **Brown-capped**, were reported in Allenspark, with **Gray-crowned Rosy Finches** also being seen in other locations. Unseasonal birds included **Yellow-headed Blackbird** and **Lesser Goldfinch**. Other good sightings included **White-winged Dove**, **American Pipit**, **Eastern Bluebird**, **Western Bluebird**, **White-throated Sparrow**, the continuing **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, and **White-winged Crossbill**. Altogether 131 bird species were seen in December making this a very good month, although not beating the record 138 species seen in 2010.

**CONTRIBUTORS TO THE NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER INVENTORIES**

Dale Adams, Scott Baron, Alan Bell, J.D. Birchmeier, Mike Blatchley, David Blue, Julia Bond, Maggie Boswell, Boulder Christmas Bird Count, Kat Bradley-Bennett, Kitty Brigham, Alex & Gillian Brown, Peter Burke, Ryan Bushong, Jan Chu, Matt Clark, Ann Cooper, Eric DeFonso, Todd Deininger, David Dowell, John Drummond, Bill Fink, Ted Floyd, Steve Frye, Peter Gent, Jean-Pierre Georges, Thomas Heinrich, Philip Henson, Bryan Guarente, Adam Jack, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Lark Latch, Petrea Mah, Carol McCasland, Mark Miller, Mark Minner-Lee, Steve Miodinow, Lynn Monroe, Nick Moore, Sharon Norfleet, Christian Nunes, Tracy Pheneger, Pam Piombino, Bill Prather, Sue Riffe, Joe Roller, Peter Ruprecht, Scott Severs, Carl Starace, Sally Swain, John Tumasonis, John Vanderpoel, David Waltman, Tom Wilberding, Wild Bird Center, Dan Zmolek.

Please see the Boulder County Audubon Society [website](#) for monthly and yearly wildlife inventories. Since 1979, Boulder County Audubon Society volunteers have submitted monthly observations of birds and mammals from [50 mapped areas](#) within Boulder County. Some observers submit a complete list of all birds or mammals seen or heard. Others submit only uncommon or noteworthy sightings. We receive reports from approximately 20-40 observers each month. In recent years many of these reports have come from postings on the Colorado Field Ornithologists' "CObirds" web site. We also include observations from the Boulder Christmas Bird Count, Indian Peaks Four-Season Bird Counts, and other counts and birdathons. For a few common birds we have no numerical data, as they have simply been listed as "present" from month to month.

## Special Gardening Workshop presented by Audubon Rockies and Boulder Audubon Habitat Heroes: Gardening for Beauty and Birds

**Sept. 26, 9am to 12 pm**



*Photo of monarch on coneflower  
by Sharon Daugherty*

This half-day workshop is for both novice and veteran gardeners who are interested in wildscaping tips and techniques, attracting wildlife in an urban environment, eliminating chemicals in the landscape, and minimizing water consumption. The workshop will feature two prominent gardening and horticultural experts:

**Marcia Tatoe** – Writer and columnist for *Sunset Magazine* and the *Denver Post*, and author of *Cutting Edge Gardening in the Intermountain West and Perennials for Dummies*. Marcia will discuss how wildlife habitat can coexist within a covenant controlled community, and how to ensure your garden pleases both wildlife and fastidious neighbors.

**Deryn Davidson** – CSU Horticulture Extension Agent for Boulder County. Deryn will explore how gardens can be designed to enhance the aesthetics of a site, attract pollinators, and provide habitat for an array of wildlife.

**WHO:** Hosted by Audubon Rockies, Boulder County Audubon Society, Terra Foundation and Boulder County Parks and Open Space

**WHERE:** Prairie Room, Boulder Country Parks and Open Space, 5201 St. Vrain Rd., Longmont, CO

**WHEN:** Saturday, September 26, 2015, Workshop begins at 9:00 a.m.

**REGISTRATION:** \$15.00/person - Visit [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com) keyword – Habitat Hero

Learn more about Audubon Rockies and the Habitat Hero program at <http://rockies.audubon.org>.

### Teen Naturalist Fall 2015 Schedule

Boulder County Audubon teen naturalist meet once monthly during the school year to document and photograph nature. Middle and high school students are eligible for the program, and we also accept interested college students. We provide loaner cameras for students interested in photography. For more information or to apply contact Steve Jones: [curlwsj@comcast.net](mailto:curlwsj@comcast.net); 303-494-2468.

**Saturday, September 19:** Brainard Lake area to search for moose, elk, pikas, and late-blooming wildflowers. Meet at the North Foothills Trail parking area, on North Broadway a half-mile north of US 36, at 6:30 a.m. Return around noon.

**Sunday, October 11:** Close-up photography of butterflies and other insects in tallgrass prairies of the South Boulder Creek State Natural Area. Meet at 8:30 at the South Boulder Creek West trailhead parking area, on South Broadway one-half-mile north of Eldorado Springs Drive.



*Pika. Photo courtesy of Steve Jones*

**Sunday, November 8:** Wintering raptor survey and photography along South Rabbit Mountain survey route. Meet at 9 at the North Foothills Trail parking area, on North Broadway a half-mile north of US 36. We'll have lunch on the house at Basil Flats and return around 12:30.

**Sunday, December 20, sunrise-2 PM: Christmas Bird Count.** We'll spend the day in the field counting all the birds we see or hear within designated areas of the Boulder count circle. Data from this count, which is conducted from Alaska to Argentina, have been used for more than 100 years to track North American wintering bird populations. Contact Steve in advance if you would like to participate. Meeting places to be determined.

### Dodd Reservoir Prairie Restoration Wildflowers are Flourishing!!

Native grasses and wildflowers are returning to Boulder Audubon’s Dodd Reservoir Prairie after removing nonnative plants and weeds. Learn more about this project at our website: <http://www.boulderaudubon.org/restoration-of-boulder-county-audubons-dodd-reservoir/>



Coreopsis, sunflowers, and a few native grasses. Photo courtesy of Steve Jones.



Native bee on sunflower. Photo courtesy of Steve Jones.



Bronze copper on milkweed. Photo courtesy of Steve Jones.



Prairie restoration area looking west from stone bench. Photo courtesy of Steve Jones.

### Holiday Sale and Program with Rob Palmer!! November 24, 2015

#### “Encounters with Owls and Other Raptors”

Sale 5:30PM to 7:15PM/8:30 to 9PM/Program 7:15PM to 8:30PM

Unitarian Universalist Church, 5001 Pennsylvania Ave., Boulder

Rob Palmer is a professional photographer, former science teacher, and raptor expert! He will regale you with photos and tales of encounters with owls and other birds of prey.

Our annual sale features unique one-of-a-kind jewelry and artwork, greeting cards, nature-related books, crafts, baked goods, and more! Plus you can enjoy hot mulled cider and homemade cookies while you browse!!

## July added to string of record hot months globally

July was the hottest on record globally as a large El Nino event gathered strength in the Pacific, making it more likely that 2015 will exceed last year as the warmest year recorded.

Average land and sea-surface temperatures worldwide were 0.38 degrees above the 1981-2010 average, easily exceeding the previous record July anomaly of 0.30 degrees set in 1998, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

If so, it will mean that five of the first seven months of 2015 have been the hottest for their respective months, and make it increasingly likely that this year will eclipse 2014 as the warmest in about 135 years of records.

Driving this year's warmth has been the brewing El Nino the Pacific, which has added to the background warming caused by climate change, climatologists say.

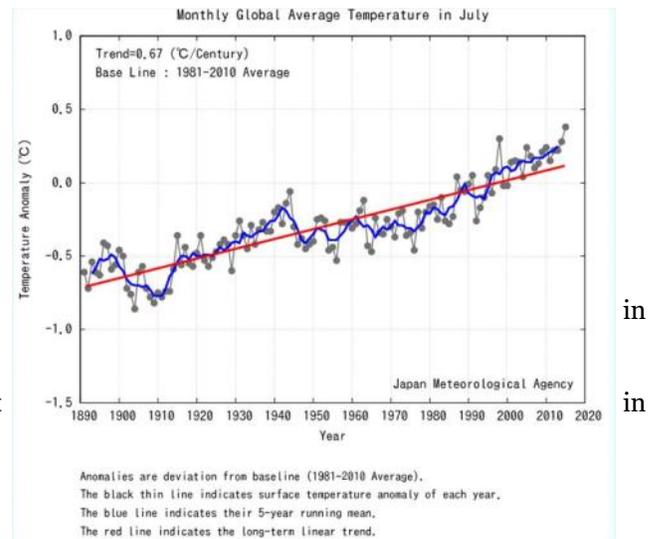
During El Nino years, changing circulation patterns result the Pacific Ocean absorbing less heat and even releasing some of its stored warmth to the atmosphere. Global temperatures typically get a 0.1-0.2 degrees boost during such events.

This year's El Nino is currently rated by Australia's Bureau of Meteorology as a "medium to strong" event and one that is continuing to strengthen. It may not peak until late this year, according to model projections.

The impacts of El Ninos include shifting rainfall patterns, with western Pacific regions including eastern Australia typically having drier-than-usual conditions while nations on the eastern Pacific are hit by flooding and heavy rains.

Peter Hannam, Environment Editor, The Sydney Morning Herald, August 15, 2015

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/heating-up-july-added-to-string-of-record-hot-months-globally-20150814-giznco.html>



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## Why do sagebrush landscapes matter? Dave Showalter interview excerpt with Alison Lyon -Holloran, the Executive Director of Audubon Rockies

<http://www.westernwild.org/audubon-sage-campaign-interview-with-alison-holloran/>

“Sagebrush landscapes can be looked at from many different perspectives. First, the historic perspective; then the anthropogenic perspective. When you think of the American West, you think of sagebrush, kind of wide sweeping open plains, the cowboy story. We have a lot of history and love for the land just based on what we imagine the West to be. What we imagine is more important from the wildlife side. In Wyoming, we have some of the biggest expanses of sagebrush that dip down into Colorado and Utah, up into Montana, across the Great Basin and they provide a lot of wildlife habitat. Sagebrush provides range for mule deer and elk, which from the human side of things and economically, provides a stable base for hunting and ecotourism. Unfortunately, in the early days sagebrush was looked upon as a problem species—one that we needed to clear out for development and agricultural practices—so we really have taken out a lot of our sagebrush ecosystems and therefore a lot of our sagebrush obligates (species). We have seen mule deer populations diminish, we’ve seen sage grouse populations diminish, not to mention all of the other obligates that we don’t really think about, the bird species, sage thrasher, sage sparrow, Brewer’s sparrow, species like reptiles—you know people don’t like to think of snakes but they are out there as well, right down to the insects and the plant diversity has diminished. So we are looking at an ecosystem that is extremely important for many, many species of wildlife and hence very important for our economy in the West and yet we keep slicing it and dicing it and taking it away . . . Besides the grasslands, the sagebrush ecosystem is one of our most imperiled ecosystems in the United States.”



## Local Wildlife Rehabbers At Work

**Colorado Native Bird Care and Conservation** had their busiest baby bird season ever with hundreds of patients! They care for birds and small mammals, including bats! Check out their website for more info (and consider giving them a donation):

<http://www.coloradonativebird.org/> Each of these patients was brought in as an orphaned baby and hand-raised.



*Juliette the broad-tailed hummingbird. Photo © Brent Daniel*



*Spotted Sandpiper. Photo © Brent Daniel.*



*Myotis Bat. Photo © Georgja Anderson*

**Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute** provides a “bird’s-eye view” into the nests of Barn Owls, with their nest cams. Barn Owls are busy raising their second clutch of owlets this year in Scott Rashid’s nest boxes. Scott also provided an educational field trip this summer for a lucky group of folks where he demonstrated how to band barn owls! Check out his website for more info and to tune into the owls’ lives:

<http://www.carriep.org/>



*Scott Rashid, right, and assistant band barn owlets. Photo courtesy Pam Piombino.*

### 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 \$25 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 includes extra articles.