



Canyon Wrenderings

The Journal of the Black Canyon Audubon Society

Representing Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties of Western Colorado

December 2014

Volume XXVI Number 6

Annual Christmas Bird Counts

Mark Your Calendar

- **Thursday December 4**

- Birds of Costa Rica*

Come hear Paul Tickner at the Bill Heddles Center, Delta 7 p.m.
Free, for more information, see article on page 3.

- **Sunday December 14**

- Christmas bird counts*

Delta and Gunnison counts, for more information, see article this page.

- **Saturday December 20**

- Christmas Bird Counts*

Montrose bird count, for more information, see article this page.

- **Saturday January 3**

- Christmas Bird Counts*

Hotchkiss bird count, for more information, see article this page.

- **Thursday January 8**

- BCAS Board Meeting*

Join us at Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 900 S. Townsend, Montrose. Meeting starts at 6 p.m.

- **Thursday February 19**

- Bird Rehabilitation*

Brenda Miller is our guest speaker, at Bill Heddles Center, Delta, 7 p.m. for more information, see article on page 3.

Check out the BCAS website for more upcoming events:

www.blackcanyonaudubon.org

The 115th Audubon Christmas Bird Count will be held at four venues within the BCAS area. Please attend any or all – there is no charge. Everyone is welcome, regardless of skill level. Parties of birders will be arranged with at least one experienced birder per group, so it is a great opportunity for beginners to learn the birds of our area.

The Audubon Christmas Bird Counts are the longest-running wildlife census. The information is used by Audubon and other scientists to assess the health of bird populations worldwide. So, not only is it fun, the information collected is useful and highly regarded. For more information about this international effort, go to <http://birds.audubon.org/about-christmas-bird-count>

To participate, come to the individual start location to check in, get maps, and join small parties that are formed to cover sections of the count circle. The Count Compiler will let you know how and where to turn in your collected information. Some of the counts have fun events following the count that you can attend.

You can expect cold weather, so dress accordingly with warm jackets, hats, gloves, and boots. Bring a lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. And don't forget your binoculars!

Delta – Sunday, December 14

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Delta City Market parking lot where Amy Seglund will provide maps and data sheets. For more information, contact Amy Seglund, 970-252-6014 or amy.seglund@state.co.us

Gunnison – Sunday, December 14

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Hurst Hall - Rm 130 on the Western State Colorado University campus. Bird as much of the day as possible, then meet at Arden Anderson's house at 5 p.m. for a Chili potluck and compilation of the day's records. After the compilation, Arden will present a slide show of a birding trip he took this year to Peru. For more information, contact Arden Anderson Call at (970) 641-5322 or kankan@frontier.net.

Montrose – Saturday, December 20

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Montrose BLM/Forest Service South Conference Room at 2465 South Townsend Ave. We will then meet at the Two Rascals Brewing Co. at 147 N. 1st St. to compile data and enjoy good cheer. For more information, contact Missy Siders, (970) 240-5332, (970) 275-6639, or msiders@blm.gov

Hotchkiss – Saturday, January 3

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Hotchkiss City Market parking lot near the junction of Highways 92 & 133. For more information, contact Jason Beason at (970) 310-5117 or jason.beason@rmbo.org.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Comings and Goings

As I write this, Thanksgiving is only days away and the holiday season is on the horizon. That can mean only one thing: Christmas Bird Count time! I hope that all of you will make at least one Christmas Bird Count a part of your holiday celebrations. This is the 115th Christmas Bird Count and the information that is collected has never been more important. It may be cold outside, but the fun of going out with fellow birders and seeing what is about is a heartwarming experience.

*Audubon has recently released important scientific information that current environmental changes are on a trajectory that will change what birds we will be seeing and is putting many of our familiar birds in peril for their long term survival, not to mention the potential for pushing birds already at risk over the brink. If you have not seen it, the September-October issue of **Audubon Magazine** is perhaps the most important the organization has put out. This is not a pleasant topic, but one that we must be aware of. Without awareness and discussion, positive change will not occur. It is easy to be a metaphorical ostrich or split hairs about what you believe to be true or not, but it is time to put politics aside, do some critical thinking, and do our individual best to work in a positive direction to reverse the current direction of climate change. The world is a different place than it was for past generations and will continue to be different for generations to come. For better or worse, past actions and our actions today will have an effect on the future. What I appreciated about the Audubon perspective was its hopefulness. So, proceed hopefully as individuals and make the small changes that add up to positive change.*

Change on the BCAS Board: *For the past couple of years, Rich Stafford has served on the BCAS board and has ably handled the Membership Committee responsibilities. Rich will be leaving us soon for Bend, Oregon and has resigned from the board, but is continuing with Membership Committee duties until he departs. Thank you, Rich, for your participation on the board and all that you have done for the BCAS! We wish you well.*

With Rich's departure, it makes recruitment of new board members even more acute for the organization. Many of the current board members have served long tenures, and we need to bring on new people to keep the organization healthy, happy, and productive. We serve a far flung area, so if you live in Ouray, Crested Butte, Paonia, Telluride, Norwood, or any of the other outlying areas we cover, don't let that hold you back as we are willing to accommodate any and all who would like to participate. In this day and age of electronic communication, we can be quite creative in how we go about our business. Currently we meet as a board on the second Thursday of every other month, rotating between Montrose and Delta. Our next meeting is scheduled for January 8 in Montrose. That is not set in stone and we can be very accommodating in when, where, and how we meet. The critical thing is the first step, which is having you step up and take part. We have many fun and important activities and programs that we carry out throughout the year that you can become involved in. Please call any of the Board Members listed in this newsletter and let them know you would like to be more involved!

Jon Horn

BCAS President

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Upcoming Speakers

The BCAS strives to bring in speakers on alternate months. If you have visited places with unique or unusual birds or habitat that you wish to share with our membership, please contact any BCAS Board member and we will add you to our schedule of upcoming talks.

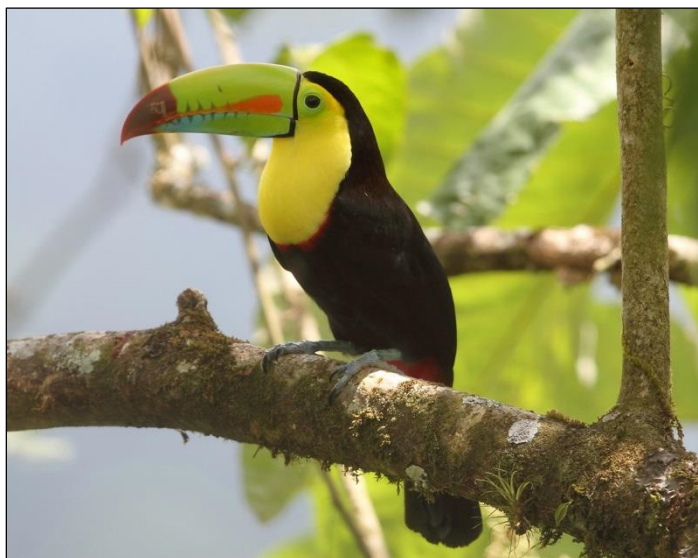
Check out our website for currently scheduled events:
www.blackcanyonaudubon.org

Birds of Costa Rica

By Paul Tickner

Costa Rica is a friendly, safe, and easily accessible destination and it hosts more than five percent of the world's biodiversity, making it one of the foremost destinations for eco-tourism. While less than 1/5 the size of Colorado, Costa Rica boasts more than 900 bird species, giving it one of the greatest densities of bird species in the world, along with more than 200 different mammals and 220 species of reptiles. Costa Rica is also one of the easier countries to explore by yourself and has plenty of non-birding activities available, which makes it a very family and non-birding spouse-friendly destination.

I've made three trips to Costa Rica, with varying degrees of birding intensity, and have learned a lot about what goes into making a successful do-it-yourself Costa Rica birding trip.



Keel-billed Toucan found in Costa Rica

Come hear Paul talk about the birds and more in Costa Rica. Sponsored by the Black Canyon Audubon Society, Paul will be sharing his experiences in Costa Rica on December 4 at 7 p.m. at the Bill Heddles Recreation Center in Delta. There is no charge.

TIP: to put BCAS website on your desktop for quick access, minimize the website then drag the left side of the address bar to your desktop. BCAS is now one click away!



Resplendent quetzal found in Costa Rica

Bird Rehabilitation

Thursday, February 19, Brenda Miller of Roubideau Rim Wildlife Rescue (RRWR) will share a power point presentation focussing on her experiences working with birds, including making the decision to euthanize or to provide point of release rehabilitation. She may also provide a different perspective to the hobby of bird-feeding.

Come join us on February 19 at 7 p.m. at the Bill Heddles Recreation Center in Delta for an informative and interesting evening hearing about bird rehabilitation.

Laredo Birding Festival February 4 -7

Looking to escape a Colorado winter – head south to Laredo, TX. Mild weather and their unique Rio Grande eco-system makes Laredo home to hundreds of local and migratory birds. The festival offers a variety of full day trips as well as small, personalized trips with professional guides. The festival offers 'engaging' cultural excursions. The Saturday night keynote speaker is Kevin Karlson.

Find out more and sign up by going online to
www.laredobirdingfestival.com

Ridgway Bird Banding Program Success

By Nancy Kelso

Our Ridgway State Park bird banding event for the schools was very successful again this year. We had approximately 450 students from schools in Montrose, Delta and Hotchkiss. Local Ridgway students also participated from the Ridgway Elementary, the Montessori School, and the homeschool program.

The Black Canyon Audubon Society, Rocky Mountain Observatory, and Ridgway State Park annually join forces to provide an exceptional learning program of netting, banding and releasing birds at the park. Children get to see first-hand as scientists collect data during this migratory season. In addition to the bird banding station, kids rotate throughout a bird skin and habitat station. The bird skin station allows children to see and touch birds that have been preserved for the Audubon Education Program. Kids also go looking for birds by the river with binoculars and bird guides. The habitat station allows kids to investigate the relationship plants in the park have to the birds. This is a quote from a fourth grade teacher in Montrose participating in the program with her students "...the opportunity to see real scientists at work is invaluable. The catching, banding, recording, and releasing of birds is so very exciting. The connections we can make between what we see/experience at Ridgway and our curriculum (adaptations, ecosystems) makes learning come to life for the kids and gives many of them experiences they might not get otherwise".

(Editor comment: The BCAS received many letters from students thanking the BCAS for our sponsorship. The following are highlights from the letters: students were impressed with the 'stuffed' birds (i.e., the BCAS bird skin collection) and banding, one student was impressed with an unknown fact about vultures, some letters had colorful artwork that added to their thank you note, and many others had heartwarming comments, including the wish that the earth will stay clean and have a place for animals to live. Most letters expressed the fun they had and the hope to come back again. SB)



Sheryl Radovich with students.

Update on Colorado Audubon

By Chris Lazo

On Saturday, November 8, the Audubon Colorado Council (ACC) held the fall meeting via tele-conference. Since the ACC president was dealing with a family medical situation the meeting was led by the ACC Vice President. Along with the executive group there were chapter representatives from: Arkansas Valley, Audubon Society of Greater Denver, Black Canyon, Boulder County, Fort Collins, and Weeminuche. There were no representatives from Aiken, Evergreen, Grand Valley, and Roaring Fork Chapters.

Some of the chapters shared interesting and innovative initiatives. One initiative included moving from a traditional printed newsletter to a one page electronic newsletter. Another initiative included forming a partnership with a county open space agency to develop protection for endangered species (including: Black Footed Ferret, Burrowing Owl, Northern Harrier and White-tailed Jackrabbit). A law suit has been filed against the Army Corp of Engineers to protect the Chatfield Reservoir and nature center.

Because the ACC treasurer has recently resigned, the Chair of the Public Policy Committee provided the treasurer's report. The ACC has \$890 in the checking account. The ACC Vice-President has been working on updating the ACC web page and ACC may soon have control of a list serve that belonged to a previous state Audubon association for the use of all Colorado Audubon members.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding a petition to ban lead ammunition in Colorado that is being presented to the Colorado Wildlife Commission. Since BCAS has already endorsed the petition, the BCAS representative voted in favor of ACC sending the Wildlife Commission a letter endorsing the ban. The measure passed.

The Public Policy Committee expects the upcoming Colorado legislative session to be one of mainly a defensive nature. While there may be support from moderate western slope politicians on water issues most others legislation is expected to be anti-conservation in essence.

Another discussion was held on the compensation that ACC is able to offer our longstanding state lobbyist which is seriously below parity with other lobbyists. A variety of options to increase the pay for the lobbyist were offered but none would be able to get the needed increase by itself. ACC now contributes \$19,000 as its half and this should be increased to near \$30,000. Many testimonials were given as to the effectiveness of the lobbyist and the vital need for our one and only conservation voice in the capitol.

Under new business it was reiterated that ACC is in need of someone to step up and serve as the treasurer. This person would oversee our checking account and make reports four times a year at the ACC meetings. BCAS is still seeking a member to take over representing the chapter to ACC so that the current representative can move to an "At Large" status thereby giving the western slope a greater voice in our statewide Audubon coalition. Finally the 2015 schedule of meetings was set and the dates for ACC meetings are: Feb. 7 (via phone), May 9 (in person), Aug. 8 (via phone) and Nov. 7 (in person).

Yellow-billed cuckoo - Update

Effective November 3, 2014, the western population of the Yellow-billed cuckoo is protected as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) determined that a distinct population segment of the bird found in portions of 12 western states, Canada, and Mexico warranted listing. The 12 western states include Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.



Yellow-billed cuckoo

Following listing of a species, the Service then designates critical habitat and develops a recovery plan. Recently, the Service re-opened the comment period on the proposed rule to designate critical habitat. Please provide comments to the Service by close of business on January 12, 2015. For further information on comment submission, go to the Federal Register, Vol. 79, No. 218, page 67154, November 12, 2014. Note that the Yellow-billed cuckoo is found in riparian areas along river bottoms and may occur along the Uncompahgre River in Delta, Montrose, and Ouray Counties.

Update on Proposed Marine Drive Park

In the Fall 2014 issue of *Canyon Wrenderings*, information was provided about BCAS partnering with the City of Montrose to develop a plan for a city property that would be specifically managed for wildlife. Several BCAS members have met to discuss conceptual uses of the property and identified an initial need to collect baseline data in 2015. Baseline data would be collected to identify seasonal changes in vegetation and wildlife species and persistence and volume of water present on the site throughout the year in anticipation of developing a visitor trail and interpretive signs. Recently, representatives of BCAS met with the Montrose Parks Board to discuss concepts being discussed by BCAS members. At this time, we are in the beginning stages of the project, so it is a wonderful time for anyone who would like to get in on the ground floor of planning to help keep the project moving forward. Recently, Claudia Strijek of Gunnison contacted BCAS and expressed an interest in working on the management plan. Claudia has wide experience in environmental sciences and has a strong graphic design background. We will keep you posted on how the project proceeds and hope that you might be interested in participating. (Text is continued on next page.)



One of several wetland ponds



Field with milkweed in upland portion of property. Monarch butterflies depend on milkweed during different life stages.

Marine Drive Park (Concluded)

As an initial step in the project, 10 photo point locations were staked on the property and each location typically included several different photographs. The photos will be used to document changes throughout the year, as well as used to document future improvements. We would like to have a BCAS member come forward and volunteer to take photos from the points on a regular schedule of about once every two months. A map will be available showing the locations of the individual staked locations along with a set of photos showing the various images that we would like to reproduce. If this is of interest to you and you would like to be our project photographer, please contact Jon Horn at (970) 209-5404 and he can get you set up.

eBird and the Marine Road Park

By Jon Horn

Jon Horn, President BCAS, contacted eBird and the Marine Road Park parcel is now an eBird Hotspot. That means that anyone that identifies birds on the property can simply click on the hotspot symbol, add birds they have seen there, and we will have a compilation of birds for the area. Once you have reported birds from that location, it will also appear on your list of birding places, so you can either pick it from your list or find it on the map. If you want to see what birds have been found, you go to Explore Data and Explore Hotspots and either zoom in on the location from the world map or begin typing in Marine Road Park and it will come up. There are a variety of ways you can see the data, including bar charts. It would be great if someone or a group could go out every couple of weeks and identify and count what they see and enter the data.

For more information on using eBird, see the Fall 2014 issue, found on the BCAS website if you no longer have a copy.

El Golfo de Santa Clara, Mexico

By Elaine Probasco

On September 25, 2014, we gathered in Delta, Colorado, to learn about the Colorado delta from David Sussman. David Sussman and his wife Dolores have visited El Golfo de Santa Clara, Mexico, perhaps 100 times. The area is about 2 hours away from Yuma, Arizona, their winter home. Drawn first by the beaches they found themselves captivated by the geologic formations and ecology of the area. Then the day came when the 100 square miles of badlands called, and the Sussmans discovered fossils and participated in collecting them for academia.

From pictures of the land: tilts, hoodoos, beaches, coquina walls; of the plants: evening primrose, Spanish needles, Desert Lily; of the reptiles: coachwhip snake, zebra-tailed lizard; of the

BCAS Protects Birds, Bird Habitat, and BIRDERS!

By Robin Nicholoff

BUT WE NEED YOUR FINANCIAL HELP!

Yes, protecting birders is one of our recent efforts that is paying off. Here's how:

After seeking our input on conditions at the famously birdy Fruitgrowers Reservoir, Delta County government agreed to improve safety for birders by constructing a parking area and bird watching area (including handicap ramps), as well as lowering the posted speed limit along the causeway where birders tend to walk while focusing more on birds than vehicle traffic.

BCAS initially met with Delta county personnel in 2013 to discuss a proposed gravel quarry on N Road, about 0.5 mile north of Fruitgrowers Reservoir. BCAS members provided recommendations. The county's work at Fruitgrowers Reservoir is underway and the majority of the work is expected to be completed by the end of 2014 with the remainder of all work completed by Crane Days.

While this action did not cost BCAS hard dollars, many of our actions and advocacy work do require expending our meager funds. From our wildly successful educational and bird-banding activities, to running Eckert Crane Days that brings birders from around the West to experience the Sandhill Crane migration, to helping fund a lobbyist at the state capital, we need your help to make things happen.

While any amount you can afford will be greatly appreciated, we are asking you to consider a tax-deductible year-end donation of \$15 to \$30 (OR....) so that we may continue our efforts to help birds, their habitat, and the people who love them. Your contribution can do so much good for our feathered friends and for you!

Please mail your check to:

Black Canyon Audubon Society
PO Box 387
Delta, CO 81416

El Golfo de Santa Clara (Concluded)

fossilized bones: camel, horse, wolf, ground sloth; of birds: gulls, terns, Marbled Godwit; Red Knot, Sanderling; to the odds and ends of shadows, tracks, and wind patterns, David Sussman convinced us of the magic of the Colorado River Delta.

Black Canyon Audubon Society
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<http://www.blackcanyonaudubon.org>



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Your expiration date is shown on your mailing label. BCAS on the label means you are a local member only. Labels with an ID number indicate national membership. If your membership has expired, please renew using the form at right. National renewals should follow the instructions at the bottom of the form.

To help reduce our use of paper and postage and to receive photos in color, send an e-mail to:
blackcanyonaudubon@gmail.com or megrich@montrose.net

Black Canyon Audubon Society (NAS chapter C9ZD140Z)
Membership Renewal and Application Form

Members may participate in all chapter activities, receive the *Canyon Wrenderings* newsletter and vote on chapter issues. Annual local membership dues are \$10 if newsletter is received electronically, \$15 if newsletter is mailed. Dues remain locally.

(Check one) Renewal (see mailing label for expiration date) _____
New Member _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (optional): _____

Enc: _____ \$10 for email newsletter.
Email address: _____
_____ \$15 for U.S. mail/print subscribers.

Mail your renewal to:
Black Canyon Audubon Society, PO Box 387, Delta, CO 81416.

If you would like to join or donate to National Audubon Society and receive Audubon magazine, please send a check for \$20 to National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. Please use this form and list Black Canyon Audubon Society/C2ZD140Z on your check so that BCAS can receive membership recruitment funds.