



# THE DIPPER

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Editor: Margaret McDole

Assistant Editor: Mark Meremonte

## Earth Day Fair Coming Soon

This year's Earth Day Fair will be Saturday, April 21, at Evergreen Lake House.

## Dawn Chorus

The Dawn Chorus celebration will be held Sunday, May 6, at Evergreen Lake. Help give spring and our returning feathered friends an enthusiastic welcome.

For more details, contact Sylvia Brockner at 303-674-4851.

## Telephone Tree

A reminder to send your phone number and/or e-mail address to Peggy Durham, [peggy.durham@comcast.net](mailto:peggy.durham@comcast.net), if you wish to be included in the Telephone Tree for notification of any last-minute schedule changes.

## TENAS Website

Visit [www.dipper.org](http://www.dipper.org) for updates on field trips and chapter meetings and a link to current and past issues of *The Dipper*.

Submit articles and photographs directly to Webmaster Natasha Japp, [jappnc@terra.com.br](mailto:jappnc@terra.com.br), and Peggy Durham, [peggy.durham@comcast.net](mailto:peggy.durham@comcast.net).

## Sights and Sounds of Mongolia

Visit the vast landscape of Mongolia at the TENAS April General Meeting. Located between Russia and China, the land of Chinggis Khan is often called the "last place on earth."

Open to Western tourism since 1990, Mongolia offers travelers an unparalleled opportunity to experience one of the last nomadic cultures on earth.

Your tour guides, Jim and Cathy Shelton, spent three weeks in September traversing 2,000 miles in four-wheel-drive vans and staying in tourist camp gers (yurts). Our journey will take you from the capital, Ulaan Bataar, to mountain taiga, broad steppes, expansive lakes and the Gobi Desert.

"Wilder than the Wild West" is how Jim describes Mongolia, which is characterized by big skies and fence-free range. Visitors are transported to an era reminiscent of Colorado's distant past.

Cowboys on horseback herd cattle, sheep, goats, yaks and camels. Towns are few and far between with 40% of Mongolians living the nomadic lifestyle.

"A nature-lover's paradise" is Cathy's view of Mongolia. Although this was not a birding trip, Cathy identified and photographed many fascinating birds and wildflowers. The abundance of raptors was astounding. Hopefully, our talented audience will help identify some of the mystery birds photographed.



Transportation by Camel in the Gobi Desert. Photo by Jim and Cathy Shelton

Jim and Cathy are longtime TENAS members, and Cathy is a past president. In 1994, the couple moved to Evergreen from Seattle, where Cathy was a volunteer photographer for Woodland Park Zoo and published a number of her photographs. Jim retired from US West in 2000 and now works on affordable housing and bicycling.

"Why Mongolia?"—the question most asked when the Sheltons announced their destination—will be answered with photos, video and music unique to the Mongolian people.

Anyone with a spirit of adventure will enjoy the program on Thursday, April 5, at 7 p.m. at Evergreen Recreation Center, 5300 S. Olive Road, behind Evergreen High School. Refreshments and a business meeting will follow the program.

Note: This program was originally scheduled for February, but was cancelled due to a snowstorm. We are fortunate to have Jim and Cathy reschedule their adventure.



# President's Message

## Nature Center Update

For many years, TENAS has hoped for the opportunity to establish a nature center in or near Evergreen.

Last fall, TENAS began negotiations with the Evergreen Park and Recreation District board for leasing the warming hut at Evergreen Lake to use as a nature center. Several of our board members went before the recreation board in September to state our ideas for this project and to answer questions from them.

On Feb. 20 of this year, we went before the board to reiterate our plans. The following are most of my remarks to the board.

"We are here tonight again to express our interest in leasing the warming hut for eight months a year for at least five years to use as a nature center and to answer questions from the rec board.

"TENAS' Mission Statement says in part: . . . 'to inspire and educate our community for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.'

"TENAS members were very excited about the offer made in the fall to lease the warming hut for a nature center. We have a long-standing interest in a facility where we could establish a nature center that would be used by a wide audience.

"We have many interested members who would be willing to contribute their expertise and skills for creating displays of interest to all ages and for running classes or workshops on nature and wildlife.

"Our board feels that the location at the Evergreen Lake is ideal for this purpose. The normal, heavy foot traffic would provide an opportunity for local residents and those from further away who have come to the lake to stop by the warming hut to see and learn about local flora and fauna.

"The effort that would be required to establish a nature center that would be of positive benefit to the public would be considerable, as Walt Phillips will describe. We view this as a responsibility not to be taken lightly. But we feel we have the resources to create the kind of learning center Evergreen could be proud of.

"Examples of projects TENAS regularly undertakes for the public are bluebird nest box construction and sales, a booth at Earth Day, weed education and eradication, the Christmas Bird Count, exhibits in the display case at the library and classroom presentations in public schools.

"And in the spring of 2005, TENAS installed a scope next to the Lake House. In the two years since then, I have often gone to the scope to look at unfamiliar birds on the lake. Usually, I have to wait in line behind eager kids as they try to spot particular birds on the water. And often, I help them focus the scope so they can see clearly. Many visitors to the lake need and want information about our wonderful resource."

Polly Phillips gave a brief summary of the history of the previous offer by the rec board for TENAS to use the warming hut as a nature center in the 1990s.

*Continued on Page 5*



• To **Bud Weare** for coordinating Nest Box Sales and to volunteers for the sale: **Brad Andres, Dave Balogh, Ginny Boschen, Peggy Durham, John Ellis, Heather Johnson, Shelly Karp, Margaret McDole, Mark Meremonte, Bill and Louise Mousey, Marge Petersen, Chris Pfaff, Walt Phillips, Lynne Price, Sylvia Robertson, Kent Simon, Bill Sperry, Tim Stechert, Louisa Underwood, Dave Wald, Juanita Weare, Irma Wolf** and EHS student **Amanda Dillon**.

• To **Eric Hogan** for leading the nest-box building crew and to all who helped in building the nest boxes.

• To **Peggy Durham, Walt and Polly Phillips** and **Cathy Shelton** for presenting TENAS' plan for the Evergreen Lake Warming Hut to the Evergreen Park and Recreation District board.

### 2007 Officers

<b>President</b>	Peggy Durham	303-674-8648
<b>Vice President</b>	Brad Andres	303-670-0101
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<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Kay Niyo	303-679-6646
<b>Treasurer</b>	Walt Phillips	303-674-7744

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<b>David Wald</b>	303-674-0417
<b>Bud Weare</b>	303-679-8889

### Committee Chairs

<b>Audubon Colo. Rep.</b>	Dave Balogh	303-679-2799
<b>Bird Business</b>	Bill Brockner	303-674-4851
<b>Birds in Balance</b>	Kent Simon	303-674-3017
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<b>Webmaster</b>	Natasha Currllin Japp	
	jappnc@terra.com.br	



# Celebrate Earth Day 2007

Snow may cover the ground but spring looms on the horizon and with it the 18th annual Earth Day Fair at Evergreen Lake and Lake House. Registrations are already being received and we are expecting another full house for this fantastic event. So mark your calendars for Saturday, April 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Among the governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations already committed to attending are Dr. Pieter Tans of NOAA with his informative and timely information on global warming.

Also planning to attend are Wildlife 2000, the U.S. Forest Service with "Smokey the Bear," the Colorado Division of Wildlife, TENAS, Sierra Club, the Evergreen Garden Club and Hawk-Quest's live birds of prey, along with

many more local and statewide organizations.

The Earth Day Fair is your opportunity to get environmental questions—from air, fire and water to weather, weeds and wildlife—answered in one room.

Each year we try to find new exhibitors to share their knowledge, concerns and solutions. If you have suggestions for new organizations for the 2007 fair, please call me, 303-674-8610, or e-mail me at



sheltonpublicaddress@hotmail.com. See you at the fair!

- Cathy Shelton  
Earth Day Fair Planning Committee

# Birds in the Balance Begins Season 13

Birds in the Balance begins our 13th season of bird and plant inventories along Bear Creek. The cornerstone of the project has become our consistent fieldwork collecting bird records over the years.

Thanks to all who have participated! Your persistence and support has helped make this happen. We need additional support from leaders, co-leaders and volunteers to maintain the continuity.

Leaders do not have to be strong birders or botanists. Their primary responsibility is to schedule birding trips to their sites once a month, May through September. They may spend an additional hour or two on record keeping for each trip. A total of 15 to 25 hours over the whole season depends mainly on the time spent in the field.

We will publish a leader list in the next *Dipper*.

Both novice and experienced volunteers are needed and welcome. This is an opportunity to learn for the beginner. For the more experienced observer, you are contributing to the growing knowl-

edge base of the Bear Creek ecosystem. Plant study trips vary with the growing season.

Put the monitoring windows for 2007 on your calendar and call a leader:

**May 12-20**

**June 9-17**

**July 14-22**

**Aug. 11-19**

**Sept. 15-23**

We have documented more than 225 different bird species in 20-plus habitats in the Bear Creek corridor that traverses the five Colorado east slope life zones. Now, more than 70% of all our bird sightings are available on the Bird Source website, Ebird, [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org).

To view our data, go to Colorado Hot Spots on the website. Our study areas are identified on the website using the same names we use for our BIB study. Pick a bird, pick a date, pick a site, and see what we have seen.

The study contributed to the Bear Creek Valley being designated an Important Bird Area for its research and educational potential. IBA is an

international project managed locally by Audubon Colorado with goals that support data collection, collaborative decisions, and habitat maintenance and enhancement for bird species.

IBA helps support our goals of habitat enhancement along Bear Creek. Because of our IBA status, Audubon Colorado contributed funds to the spotting scope at Evergreen Lake and another grant for a GPS receiver to map BIB sites and survey routes.

We have published the Bear Creek Birds Checklist, a summary of the birds observed over the five life zones. The checklist is available at meetings and other chapter events.

We provided Habitat Enhancement Packets to aid homeowners in providing habitats for nesting birds.

BIB actively supported the O'Fallon Stream Improvement Project. We have also donated binoculars and field guides to the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory for birders in Mexico.

**JOIN ONE OF THE TEAMS!!**

Contact Kent Simon, BIB chair, at 303-674-3017.



# Bird Business

February was a winter month we all will remember, including the birds. Here in the mountains bird feeders became very important to all our feathered friends. In Kittredge the Varied Thrush continues daily visits to the Tofte's feeders.

Quite surprising are the four Band-tailed Pigeons that are spending the winter around Lynette Makowski's yard. They sure are very hardy birds.

A Sharp-shinned Hawk buzzed into Kay Niyo's feeders on Bear Mountain on Feb. 3. On Feb. 12, a Northern Shrike flew into Mike Krieger's yard near Bailey, one was seen on Feb. 18 at Evergreen Lake by Loie Evans and another was seen Feb. 26 by Carmon Slater in his yard.

Thirty Pine Siskins poured into Suzie deDisse's yard on Valentine's Day. I don't think they came down from Loveland. Two American Goldfinches were also in the flock.

A Northern Pygmy Owl perched atop a tree in Elaine Mongeau's yard on Feb. 15. It no doubt was checking out the bird feeders in Elaine's yard.

While visiting California, the Van Erps saw eight California Condors near Morro Bay. Congratulations, Tom and Else!

Disastrous was the terrible loss of 17 Whooping Cranes by a tornado in Florida in the middle of the month. Only one survived. This composed the remarkable flock that followed an airplane from Wisconsin to Florida last fall.

While searching for bluebirds on Feb. 20, Helen Swem found the first Easter Daisies blooming along Upper Bear Creek. Spring has arrived!

Bluebirds seem a little late in arriving this year. Three Mountain Bluebirds were seen Feb. 21 at Red Rocks Park. On the same day Else Van Erp saw a Western Bluebird at the B-Bar-J Ranch.

Robert Inman and his wife had a great trip to New Zealand in January. They saw



Northern Shrike

51 species of birds while there. They are looking forward to an upcoming trip to Texas.

Spring migration will become noticeable in March. Ducks, herons and shorebirds will be increasing daily. Watch for Avocets and Whimbrels at Evergreen Lake.

- Bill Brockner

## E-Waste Recycling Day: May 5

E-Waste is the name given to obsolete or outdated electronic equipment. Each type of electronic contains specific toxic heavy metals like lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium and lithium.

Disposal of electronics can create vast human health problems when these materials are buried into the soil and the toxic materials leach into the ground water. Pulling out heavy metals in a water treatment program is hugely expensive.

Wild Rose Congregational Church in partnership with the Evergreen Fire Department will be collecting equipment such as computers, monitors, printers, fax machines and TV's—anything electronic. There is a small collection fee for the service. The drop-off site will be the Marshdale Elementary School parking lot.

Some "professional" recyclers are only shipping the e-waste to Third World countries where the waste is

buried at a lower cost than if buried in landfills in the United States. This results in higher levels of soil contaminants in countries not having resources to properly dispose of the waste. Do your part to support proper disposal on May 5.

Another option for those with multiple electronics—such as an office up-

grading computers—is Guaranteed Recycling Xperts. GRX has a large facility off Sixth Avenue in Denver to receive equipment which it guarantees is disassembled and shredded, so that no more than 5% is land filled or incinerated. Check their website at [grxrecycles.com](http://grxrecycles.com).

- Ginny Boschen

## Nest Box Building Organizer Needed

After three years of building nest boxes, Eric Hogan will not be organizing the building of nest boxes next year. This is one of our biggest fundraisers and we are looking for a volunteer to organize nest box building next year.

Building would typically start in the fall of 2007 to support the sale in March of 2008. Interested parties should call Eric at 303-674-4985. This job includes purchasing supplies, organizing building dates, setting up production, assembling

the boxes, and delivering the boxes to the shed in time for the sale.

Thanks to all who helped build nest boxes this year, including Jeff Geiger, Jim and Cathy Shelton, Dave Balogh, Art Morse, Louisa Underwood, Karel Buckley, David Hannah, Tom Boschen, Dana Cuin and her friend Kathy. And a special thanks to Lori Hogan for cooking food to keep the volunteers coming back.

- Eric Hogan



## Spotlight on New Officer: Heather Johnson



New Program Chair Heather Johnson

Heather Johnson joined the Evergreen community in June 2004. She was born and raised in Laramie, Wyo. Upon graduating from high school, she spent the next 20 years “taking the long way home.”

Heather graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in wildlife biology. After graduation, she moved to Alaska and took a job with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where she worked at the Kodiak and Togiak National Wildlife Refuges, in the Fairbanks Ecological Services Field Office, and with the External Affairs and Migratory Bird Management offices in Anchorage.

Through this 10-year journey, Heather held positions as assistant refuge manager, regional environmental education specialist and outreach biologist. She traveled throughout Alaska working on research projects, conducting education programs in native villages, and hosting migratory bird festivals.

After her time in Alaska, Heather moved to Washington, D.C., with her

husband, Brad Andres, and held positions in the Service’s Division of International Affairs and at the National Conservation Training Center.

After three years in the big city, and being away from family and friends in the Rocky Mountains for more than 20 years, it was time to come full circle and return closer to home.

She is still working for the Service and is the assistant regional coordinator for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. In this private lands habitat restoration program, she works throughout the eight-state Mountain-Prairie Region to assist farmers and ranchers with habitat restoration and enhancement projects that benefit wildlife and help keep them on the land.

When Heather isn’t busy at work, she has many hobbies. You might see Heather out bird watching, hiking, playing tennis, skiing, fly fishing, camping or playing music. Or, you might catch her enjoying some live music and a glass of wine at one of the fun Evergreen establishments.

## President's Message

### Continued from Page 2

Then Walt Phillips, our treasurer, gave details about the financial commitment that establishing a nature center would entail.

Cathy Shelton described our weeding program at the lake for the past 12 years, which demonstrates our commitment to preserving the environment and natural ecosystems.

“We believe that TENAS is a respected organization in Evergreen, known for its good works. Our board voted unanimously in November to pursue this venture, but only if we were offered the warming hut at the lake with a five-year lease.

“TENAS would make very good use of the warming hut in the months the rec department does not need it for skating operations. We would offer to the public a service nowhere else available in Evergreen to educate the public about wildlife,

ecosystems and conservation.

“We would make good use of an existing building. Using our many talents and resources, we would be providing valuable educational information and visual displays to the community.

“We hope you will see the wisdom of this course of action for us, for the public and for the taxpayers of the park and recreation district.”

The rec board had concerns that there were other organizations that might want to use the building and about the length of the lease.

Walt stated that TENAS hoped to collaborate with other environmental organizations for displays, such as Trout Unlimited, so

we would actually be including other organizations with similar goals.

And he stated that the effort required for a responsible nature center could only be justified with a five-year lease.

We will continue to discuss the differences with the rec board and hope that we can come to an agreement that satisfies our needs and theirs.

- Peggy Durham

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# Monitoring Elk Meadow Nest Boxes

Last year we, along with Ruth Salter and Heather Johnson, located the nest boxes that had been placed around Elk Meadow Open Space in past years.

Over the course of a few weeks, we were able to find 36 boxes. Many of these were in disrepair and had not been cleaned out for a few years.

Despite this, 21 pairs of cavity-nesting birds occupied 20 suitable nest boxes (11 Mountain Bluebirds, 4 Tree Swallows, 3 Western Bluebirds, 2 Violet-green Swallows and 1 Mountain Chickadee) during June and July of 2006.

One box was occupied by a Violet-green Swallow pair after Tree Swallows had successfully fledged their young.

We did not monitor the nest boxes regularly enough to be sure of how many young were produced, but, by examining nest contents, we believe that all but one or two boxes successfully fledged young. The high occupancy and success of the Elk Meadow boxes inspire us to make a more serious monitoring effort in 2007.

By the end of the season, we determined that 30 box locations would be suitable for nesting bluebirds and swallows. We removed some nest boxes that



**Tree Swallow looks out of a nest box in Elk Meadow.** *Photo by Kay Niyo*

were in more heavily wooded areas, cleaned out all boxes, and replaced some that were in disrepair.

We developed data forms for collecting nest box information (which will be posted on the TENAS website); developed a database for storing information on occupancy, clutch size and fledging success; and plotted box locations in Google Earth®.

Before the start of the 2007 season, all boxes will be numbered in sequential order. We believe that checking the nest boxes at 10-day intervals is needed to obtain a reliable understanding of the success of Elk Meadow's nest box users.

We are therefore seeking your as-

sistance in achieving our objective of checking the boxes three times a month between the beginning of April and the end of July.

If you would like to be involved in this monitoring effort, please contact Brad, 303-670-0101, heatherbrad1@netzero.net) or Kay, 303-679-6646, Kay@KayNiyo.com to indicate your interest.

We will gladly show you around the trail before asking you to monitor the boxes yourself. We plan to report the results of the 2007 effort in an autumn issue of *The Dipper* and will keep Jeffco Open Space apprised of our efforts.

- Brad Andres and Kay Niyo

## Membership

We thank the new and renewing TENAS local members for their support.

### Renewing

Peggy Durham—Evergreen  
Barb Harshbarger—Pine  
Art & Trudy Morse—Golden  
Kayleen Niyo—Evergreen  
John & Kathy Shofner—Evergreen  
Ed & Pat Work—Evergreen

### Renewing Family

Bill & Sylvia Brockner—Evergreen  
Robert & Jessie Davis—Evergreen  
Pete & Sue Roux—Evergreen  
Margie Bailey & Sherman Wing—  
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# Winter Weather Doesn't Deter Spurge

It may still seem like winter to us, but under the carpet on newly fallen snow a menace is emerging. Myrtle, or donkeytail, spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*) is escalating out of control in many local neighborhoods, displacing native vegetation, reducing forage for wildlife and creating a hazard for children and pets.

A drive through El Pinal, for instance, illustrates that myrtle spurge is growing and getting ready to bloom! Pulling it as soon as the ground is soft will prevent it from going to seed.

Myrtle spurge is a low-growing perennial with trailing stems of fleshy blue-green leaves. Flowers are inconspicuous, surrounded by yellow-green, flower-like bracts.

It reproduces by seed and is capable of projecting seeds up to 15 feet. It also has a strong, extensive root system and exudes toxic, milky latex, which can cause severe allergic reactions, including skin blistering.

All parts of the plant are considered poisonous. Hand pulling can control myrtle spurge since it reproduces by seed only, but it is important to remove as much root as possible. Herbicides are also effective.

Contact your County Weed Specialist for information on the appropriate herbicides to use.



**Myrtle spurge grows under a cover of snow.** *Photo by Cathy Shelton*

Take precautions to avoid sap contact with the skin and eyes. Use nitrile work gloves to protect your hands from the latex; the toxins can soak into leather gloves and cause burns. We also recommend protective eyewear and clothing when working around any of the spurges.

The Community Weed Awareness Campaign is already planning the sum-

mer's assault on noxious weeds. Mark your calendars for Community Weed Day on June 23. If you are interested in Adopting A Plot at Evergreen Lake, or helping with our education events, please contact one of us.

- Cathy Shelton, 303-674-8610  
Sylvia Robertson, 303-674-1715  
Marilyn Kaussner, 303-674-7520  
Bud Weare, 303-679-8889

## Field Trips and Outings

**Saturday, April 7**

Gulls and Waterfowl of the Plains  
**Leader: Brad Andres, 303-670-0101**

Spend the day exploring southern Weld County and eastern Boulder County for interesting water birds. Last year we tallied five gull species. We plan to return by 3 p.m. Contact Brad Andres for details. Meet at the Bergen Park Park 'n' Ride at 8 a.m.

**Saturday, April 21**

Earth Day Fair  
**Organizer: Susan Harper, 303-670-9377**

Evergreen Lake House, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Saturday, April 28**

Wheat Ridge Greenbelt  
**Leader: Mike Foster, 303-456-2647**

This trip is part of a class Mike is offering beginning birders in the Colorado Mountain Club. There should be room for a few TENAS members, so call to inquire, and to learn details. Half-day trip. Snacks and socializing afterward.

*Always call the leader on the Thursday before the trip to confirm arrangements!*



## Calendar

April 5	Chapter Meeting
April 7	Birds of the Plains Field Trip
April 21	Earth Day
April 28	Wheat Ridge Greenbelt Field Trip
May 3	Chapter Meeting
May 5	E-waste Recycling
May 6	Dawn Chorus

### Monthly Meetings (except January and July)

Evergreen Recreation Center, 5300 S. Olive Road, 7 p.m.

**Audubon Colorado Office** 303-415-0130 [www.auduboncolorado.org](http://www.auduboncolorado.org)  
**TENAS website** [www.dipper.org](http://www.dipper.org)

*The Dipper deadline for the  
 May issue is Thursday, April 5.*

**Please submit articles to:**  
*Margaret McDole, mem2@earthlink.net*

The Evergreen Naturalists Audubon Society  
 Local Membership Application

Please enroll me/us in The Evergreen Naturalists Audubon Society. I/we may participate in all chapter activities, receive *The Dipper* newsletter, and vote (both Family members may vote) on chapter issues. Dues remain local.

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- April Program—Mongolia
- Elk Meadow Nest Boxes
- Spotlight on New Officer

## In This Issue

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The Evergreen Naturalists Audubon Society, Inc.

# THE DIPPER

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