VOL. 43 NO. 2 FEBRUARY 2013

EVERGREEN AUDUBON NEWSLETTER

www.evergreenaudubon.org

NEW GBBC EVENT

Look out the window! Right now birds are flitting or soaring past and visiting your backyard. Evergreen Audubon, Hiwan Homestead Museum and Evergreen Wild Bird Store are hosting a celebration of backyard birds for adults, children and grandchildren.

The Great Backyard Bird Count Event will be held at Hiwan Homestead Museum Saturday, Feb. 9, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. All ages are welcome.

Whether you don't know a chickadee from a nuthatch or you're an avid birder seeking the perfect feeder, you can enjoy activities and learning fun, including recycled bird feeders, a scavenger hunt and the ABCs of bird identification.

Evergreen Audubon is sponsoring the event to educate you and prepare you for the actual Great Backyard Bird Count the following weekend, Feb. 15–18.

See GBBC details on page 3.

LOCAL SIGHTINGS

The Local Sightings page on the EA website has been replaced by the evergreenbirders@ evergreenaudubon.org email list.

Archived postings are available to view by members of the email list.



Java Sparrow in Oahu, Hawaii. See Bird Business on page 6. Photo by Sherman Wing



Marilyn Rhodes, center right, rides the waves of Monterey Bay in search of personal pelagic records during her 2011 Big Year.

Rhodes will share her Big Year experience at chapter meeting

Marilyn Rhodes, who compiles and writes the Bird Business column for *The Dipper*, will share her Big Year experience at the February chapter meeting. She spotted 460 North American bird species in 2011.

Marilyn is a former Evergreen Audubon president as well as a board member and committee chair. She is a Denver Audubon Master Birder.

Marilyn's Big Year kicked off in January 2011 with a trip to the Pacific Northwest. During her talk, she'll tell us how her Big Year played out and how her quest was inspired by Mark Obmascik's "The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession" and an informal competition with fellow EA members.

She will discuss what motivated her to travel around the United States in search of our feathered friends and provide tips on how you can get the most out of your birding effort.

Marilyn will share stories from some of the birding festivals she's attended (see a list of upcoming festivals on page 7), where she not only gained access to new species, but also acquired some wonderful new friendships. Of course, she'll present some of the outstanding photos documenting her Big Year adventure.

Marilyn's expertise, enthusiasm and devotion are sure to provoke us to achieve our own Big Years, or at least challenge us to set birding goals that motivate us to explore new birding places.

The February chapter meeting will be held Thursday, Feb. 7, at 7 p.m. at the Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road (across from Evergreen Library) in the downstairs Fellowship Hall.

- Kathy Madison

EVERGREEN AUDUBON

www.evergreenaudubon.org

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Meetings first Thursday except January, June, July, August 7 p.m., Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road, Evergreen

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BRAD ANDRES

Thanks to all who have renewed their memberships for 2013! You all know how important you are to accomplishing our programs.

One immediate use of your support is reinstating Vanessa Hayes' contract as executive director of the Evergreen Nature Center and increasing her hours for 2013. We look forward to another productive year for the ENC. The first event for the new year will be the Great Backyard Bird Count, which is highlighted in this month's *Dipper*.

In the past, we have mentioned the changes in the state and regional Audubon offices. On Nov. 17, Dick Prickett and other chapter representatives met with members of the dissolved Audubon Colorado state board and Audubon Rockies staff for a daylong work session to discuss organizing a new Audubon Colorado Council, which will coordinate efforts to accomplish State Audubon objectives under the new Audubon Rockies identity.

Much was accomplished in its focus on the vital Colorado bird and conservation issues as well as public policy activities to be maintained and carried on. At the end of the session, an Organizing Team was set up to bring the chapters a proposal for review for establishing a new and viable Audubon Colorado Council to be inaugurated at a meeting on March 2.

This team has worked since that meeting to develop a proposal on which Dick and I will provide feedback for the chapter. The proposal will ensure Audubon will have a presence in environmental issues brought before the Colorado Legislature. If anyone else is interested in reviewing the proposal and providing comments, please drop me a request at president@evergreenaudubon.org.

Lastly, thanks to the Walds for providing Evergreen Audubon with a holiday gift of a new larger screen for our general meeting. Please pencil in the 7th of February for our next general meeting.

Thank You, 2012 ENC volunteers!

Donald Randall	Sylvia Robertson	Linda Fisher
David Walker	Jean Thayer	Meagan Miller
Kathy Madison	Mary Fehlman	Judy Ward
Bud & Juanita Weare	Joan Ridgely	Vivian Burrows
Janet Warner	Susan Harper	Marilyn Kaussner
Pam Little	Lisa & Dave Wald	Evergreen High
Julia Bingham	Ed Furlong	School Science Club

Thanks to the hard work, love and dedication of these volunteers, 2012 was our most successful season yet!

We hosted 18,626 visitors.

In 2013, we are reorganizing the ENC volunteer program to make volunteering more exciting for you. Our new training will include CPR and first aid, as well as basic natural history. The new self-guided exhibit panels and volunteer science project will make volunteering a fun learning experience.

Look for upcoming opportunities in The Dipper or email Vanessa Hayes at encdirector@evergreenaudubon.org to learn more.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Are you ready for the Great Backyard Bird Count Feb. 15 to 18? We need you to take part to boost Evergreen-area participation.

In 2012, the Evergreen area reported the ninth-highest participation in the Great Backyard Bird Count in Colorado. As I reported last year, we had 41 checklists submitted with a total of 32 species. In 2011 we had only 19 checklists with 22 species reported. That means nearly a 100% increase.

Let's try for a 50% increase in 2013 with 60 checklists reporting. That would put us in the same league as Aurora and Fort Collins—and ahead of Boulder.

Evergreen Audubon is sponsoring an event to educate you and prepare for the count weekend. You'll find more information about that Feb. 9 event elsewhere in this newsletter.

Don't forget, however, what you'll need to do to participate in the actual GBBC:

- 1. Set up a free GBBC account through the GBBC website www.birdsource.org.
- 2. Count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more of the four days of the GBBC (Friday through Monday). You can count birds at the feeders in your backyard. You can go to one of our many area parks, like Elk Meadow or Lair o' the Bear and count birds there. You could even go to the grocery store dumpsters and count American Crows and Common Ravens.
 - 3. Submit your count results on the GBBC website.
- 4. Send us messages at evergreenbirders@evergreenaudubon.org . You can sign up for this listserv on the Evergreen Audubon website and share your sightings as they happen.

So, go out on your own or go with a group. Have lots of fun, but definitely record and submit your results. As Bird Monitoring board member, I'll be reporting the results.

- JoAnn Hackos



Photo Caption Contest

Each month in *The Dipper* we'll print a photo that needs a caption. The cleverest ones will be published in the following month's newsletter.

Please send your captions to Lisa Wald, Communications director, at communications@evergreenaudubon. org, or call 303-674-0417 if you do not have email.

Last month's winning entry came from Kathy Madison: "I'm getting out of here.... She's not our Momma...... She may smell and feel like her, but those green eyes scare me."



It's time to plan for the year's birding festivals

ABA Trips and Community Birding Festivals

I highly recommend American Birding Association birding trips and encourage you to check out upcoming trips on their website.

I also encourage you to consider traveling to out-of-state festivals like the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival in Louisiana, the Monterey Bay Birding Festival in California, the Sax-Zim Bog Festival in Minnesota, and Wings to Wetlands in Kansas, to name a few.

They are well run and you'll not only have a great birding experience, but you'll immerse yourself in the culture of these communities.

Annual Festivals in Colorado http://wildlife.state.co.us

Colorado has many wonderful birding

and wildlife events as well as community festivals. I've listed some of the ones I've attended and can recommend.

High Plains Snow Goose Festival Lamar (end of February)

The Lesser Snow Geese you will see at the High Plains Snow Goose Festival are part of the Western Central Flyway population that are on their way back to the Canadian Arctic where they nest.

This flock winters in southeastern Colorado, New Mexico, the Texas panhandle and northern Mexico.

The festival offers tours, educational programs, presentations and a banquet. www.highplainssnowgoose.com.

Monte Vista Crane Festival Monte Vista (mid-March)

The festival hosts wildlife experts,

local naturalists and biologists who present educational workshops at the Monte Vista Middle School (workshops are free), while flocks of sandhills assemble in the neighboring farm fields just east of town.

Bus tours to the nearby refuge and adjacent farmlands provide visitors with the opportunity to view this spectacle up close and personal, with a knowledgeable local guide.

Special tours feature raptor identification, sunset trips to view cranes, a visit to a local potato warehouse and visits to closed areas of the refuge for Crane Fest participants.

For a list of scheduled workshops, registration information and more, call 719-852-3552 or go to www.cranefest. com/index.html.

Continued on page 7

The 2012 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Count

On Dec. 16, observers took to the field and watched their feeders to find as many bird species as they could during the 44th Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count.

Although it seemed a bit slow, we came up with a total of 51 species, which is above the count average of 47 species and continues our tendency of seeing 50 or more species since 2005.

Warm weather in late fall may have kept some species higher in the mountains, and a light snowpack may have kept birds away from house feeders.

Redpolls have invaded Colorado this year, and a few were upslope in our forests. With the redpolls was our first record of Hoary Redpoll found in Clear Creek. We also added Brewer's Blackbirds in Brook Forest and a Chipping Sparrow in Bergen Park as new species for the count.

Our 2012 count also produced or tied high counts of Mallards, American Kestrels, Eurasian Collared-Doves, Great Horned Owls, Black-billed Magpies and Pygmy Nuthatches.

As in the last couple years, it seems our counts of Pygmy Nuthatches and Mountain Chickadees will be the highest on the continent.

Participation in 2012 was above average, with 70 field observers and 16 feeder-watchers contributing about 214 party-hours of effort. All observers counted 6,895 individual birds. The spe-

cies and numbers we counted in 2012 are indicated in the accompanying table, as are the averages from 1969 to 2011.

Thanks to all section leaders and participants, as well as the Walds for hosting the Tally Rally; Sylvia Robertson, Janet Warner and Marge Petersen for making the meat-eaters chili; Bob Santangelo for making the veggie chili; Marge for organizing the dinner; all of you for contributing to the potluck; Barbara Jean Gard for coordinating the feeder-watchers; Aaron Wald for recording the section counts; and John and Diane Sears (Evergreen Wild Bird Store) for distributing leader packets and hosting several teams on Sunday morning. See ya next year.

- Brad Andres

Summary of birds observed on the 2012 Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count, the average number seen from 1969 to 2011, and the high count and year recorded.

				-
	Number	per Year	High	Count
Common Name	1969-2011	2012	number	year
Canada Goose	8	45	70	90
Cackling Goose	<1		2	08
Wood Duck	<1		2	93/07
Gadwall	<1		1	10
American Wigeon	<1		2	96
Mallard	52	248	248	12
Northern Pintail	<1		1	96/98
Green-winged Teal	<1		1	81
Chukar	<1		1	80
Blue Grouse	<1		12	94
Wild Turkey	39	63	110	04
Great Blue Heron	<1		1	88/90
Black-crowned Night Heron	<1		1	09
Bald Eagle	1	2	5	10
Northern Harrier	<1		2	04
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	3	06/11
Cooper's Hawk	<1		2	09
Northern Goshawk	1		3	72/87/11
Red-tailed Hawk	13	29	44	11
Ferruginous Hawk	<1		2	98
Rough-legged Hawk	1		11	85
Golden Eagle	3	6	8	89
American Kestrel	1	4	4	87/12

	Number	per Year	High	Count
Common Name	1969-2011	2012	number	year
Merlin	<1		2	10
Prairie Falcon	<1		1	82
Wilson's Snipe	1	3	4	78/91/00
Rock Pigeon	76	70	212	81
Eurasian Collared-Dove	2	66	66	12
Mourning Dove	<1		2	10
Great Horned Owl	1	5	5	09/12
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1		4	95
Long-eared Owl	<1		1	74/82
Northern Saw-whet Owl	<1		1	70
Belted Kingfisher	2	5	6	04
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<1		1	80
Downy Woodpecker	29	44	51	08
Hairy Woodpecker	44	69	81	11
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	<1		3	79/89
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	15	27	39	09
Loggerhead Shrike	<1		1	several
Northern Shrike	4	5	13	86
Gray Jay	14		53	77
Steller's Jay	263	292	446	00
Blue Jay	<1		1	95/00
Western Scrub-Jay	3	15	18	11
Pinyon Jay	5		200	72

	Number	per Year	High	Count
Common Name	1969-2011	2012	number	year
Clark's Nutcracker	26	18	108	78
Black-billed Magpie	184	370	370	12
American Crow	648	1,328	1,519	00
Common Raven	115	144	200	72
Horned Lark	<1		15	86
Black-capped Chickadee	74	108	170	95
Mountain Chickadee	481	682	786	75
Juniper Titmouse	<1		1	82
Bushtit	<1		15	09
Red-breasted Nuthatch	48	43	127	93
White-breasted Nuthatch	69	117	123	10
Pygmy Nuthatch	388	1,046	1,046	12
Brown Creeper	13	13	23	75
Canyon Wren	1	1	5	81
Winter Wren	<1		2	75
American Dipper	19	21	37	87
Golden-crowned Kinglet	3		18	84
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<1		2	83/91
Mountain Bluebird	<1		2	92
Townsend's Solitaire	66	144	202	82
American Robin	136	26	1,500	72



 ${\it Clark's \ Nutcracker. \ Photo \ by \ Marilyn \ Rhodes}$

	Normalian	V	11:1-	Count
4 11	Number			Count
Common Name	1969-2011	2012	number	year
Northern Mockingbird	<1		1	78
Brown Thrasher	<1		1	several
European Starling	130	61	301	00
Bohemian Waxwing	43		580	80
Cedar Waxwing	8		163	87
Spotted Towhee	<1		4	75
Cassin's Sparrow	<1		1	71
American Tree Sparrow	3		37	84
Chipping Sparrow	0	1	1	12
Clay-colored Sparrow	<1		1	83
Fox Sparrow	<1		1	several
Song Sparrow	4	10	15	11
White-throated Sparrow	<1		1	84/06
Harris's Sparrow	<1		2	80
White-crowned Sparrow	<1	1	1	several
Golden-crowned Sparrow	<1		1	93
Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco	160	157	293	76
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	89	85	232	74
Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco	17	34	276	80
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	82	143	413	82
Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco	53	35	70	07
Dark-eyed Junco (All subspecies)	550	593	699	08
Red-winged Blackbird	55	18	586	91
Brewer's Blackbird	0	15	15	12
Common Grackle	<1		3	93
Great-tailed Grackle	<1		1	07
Brown-headed Cowbird	<1		1	09
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	128	230	429	84
Black Rosy-Finch	7		70	04
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch	16	5	140	04
All Rosy-Finches	163	235	429	84
Pine Grosbeak	13		51	07
Cassin's Finch	158	20	474	88
House Finch	165	408	443	11
Red Crossbill	65	16	643	82
White-winged Crossbill	1		16	70
Common Redpoll	4	4	30	70
Hoary Redpoll	0	1	1	12
Pine Siskin	219	268	723	08
American Goldfinch	17	1	176	00
Evening Grosbeak	132	87	420	95
House Sparrow	102	96	377	00
Number of Species	47	51	55	09/10
Talling of opoolog	7,	<u> </u>		337.10

BIRD BUSINESS MARILYN RHODES

Christmas Count reveals some surprises

Common Redpolls

Colorado (along with much of the northern United States) is experiencing a massive irruption of redpolls this season. Small flocks of a dozen or fewer and large flocks of 100 or more have been reported this winter in our state. Normally, finding one would be unusual.

On Dec. 16, the Bergen Park CBC team, led by Bill and JoAnn Hackos, was thrilled to report three **Common Redpolls** at the home feeder of Walt and Polly Phillips in Soda Creek in north Evergreen.

Rosy-Finches

The Hackos family had an early Christmas present at its home feeders, too. On Dec. 18, during the CBC count week, they saw a new yard bird—their first-ever **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**. JoAnn and Bill live in Soda Creek, elevation 7,700 feet.

Clark's Nutcracker

The Evergreen East team, led by Bob Santangelo and me, was treated to a dozen **Clark's Nutcrackers** in the Hiwan Country Club area on count day. I've been keeping records for this team since 2003, and this was the first time this species has been recorded.

Yard Birds and Critters

Coyotes and "resident" Wild Turkeys Tim and Tom, notorious in their 'hood in West Evergreen, stopped by early in the morning Dec. 25 to wish Bob and Sondra Inman a Merry Christmas! The Evergreen East CBC team also had a Wild Turkey at Peggy Durham's home on count day, Dec. 16. Another first for the team!

Recent Sightings... Out and About Swan study, anyone? Tundra Swans have been migrating in large numbers through the state. Sherman Wing reported and photographed one Nov. 30 in open water, near the dam at Windy Gap, west of Granby.

If you'd like to learn more about swans, you can see four **Trumpeter**



Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch. Photo by Bill Hackos

Swans on a pond on Colorado Highway 103, aka Squaw Pass Road, just beyond Noble Meadow in Evergreen.

The homeowner told local birder Joe Roller that he brought them with him from Wisconsin four or five years ago and has kept the water open through winter with a big fountain.

"He feeds them well, they look healthy and presumably their wings are clipped," Joe reported. "Their companion is a Black Swan."

Having them here in Evergreen gives us a rare opportunity to learn the differences between **Trumpeters**, **Tundra Swans** and **Mute Swans**. They provide a decent photo opportunity, as well.

On Nov. 28, Sherman reported **Sandhill Cranes** in Delta, about a mile west of town off of Fifth Street, in the cut cornfields. One of his photos of the cranes was included in the January *Dipper*.

On Dec. 18, Kathanne Lynch, writing from Philadelphia, asked me to post the following on cobirds: "A friend called me to report five **Sandhill Cranes** flying south over the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt near Youngfield at 3 p.m. this afternoon. I thought folks would be interested in this late date of migration over Wheat Ridge."

Kathanne also shared this information with me in her email: "I did not do the CBC in Evergreen this year. I went to my hometown in Connecticut to do



Bob Inman photographed these Wild Turkeys on Christmas Day. He also snapped this great photo of a Red Fox in his yard.



the CBC in nearby towns. On Sunday I was lucky to be assigned to count with a top birder in the area. She is from Newtown, and we counted in Newtown. People are devastated. This is an area of many pretty small towns, and lots of woods and streams."

I'm glad Kathanne was able to help and support the birder from Newtown. I'm sure she appreciated it. It must have been tonic for her soul and a welcome diversion to spend the day amidst the beauty and wildlife of the area.

Although tragedy frequently strikes far away from our mountain communities, Kathanne's comments make me remember that often there are fewer than six degrees of separation between us.

On a happier note, Sherman Wing spent Christmas with a friend in Hawaii. They saw many exotic birds, including a wonderful **Java Sparrow**, a frequent visitor to his friend's feeder in the Lanikai neighborhood of Kailua on Oahu.

(More photos on page 7.)

It's time to plan for the year's birding festivals

Continued from page 3

Lesser Prairie-chicken Viewing Near Granada, Prowers County (mid-March, April)

Visit the heart of the Great Plains to see the Lesser Prairie-chicken's distinctive breeding displays.

View chickens in Comanche National Grassland at Scenic Picture Canyon, Carrizo Creek. (The leks are closed to public access until further notice.)

Call the U.S. Forest Service, 719-523-6591, to reserve Campo lek viewing blinds. Call 719-734-5226 for any closures and other information.

Arena Dust Guided Tours offers tours to leks on private land. I can recommend this private tour: http://arenadusttours.com.

Greater Prairie-chicken Viewing Wray (late March through April)

Since Greater Prairie-chicken leks in northeastern Colorado are located on private property, guided tours are made possible through a partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Wray Chamber of Commerce, the East Yuma County Historical Society, the Wray Museum and local landowners.

To register for a tour, and for more information, visit www.wraychamber.net.

Each tour includes an evening educational program presented by Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff at the Wray Museum, the guided field trip and a ranch-style breakfast.

Gunnison Sage-grouse Festival Gunnison (early April)

The festival takes place during the sage-grouse lekking season, allowing visitors a rare opportunity to view the birds in person.

Booths and interactive activities will feature information about the Gunnison Sage-grouse, where it lives and ways we can help conserve the species.

Further information about the festival is available at www.siskadee.org.

Greater Sage-grouse Viewing Walden (mid- to late April)

Guided viewing trips are offered; tours are limited to 20 people per day. Each tour begins at 6 p.m. the day before the viewing trip, with a meal and a short educational program provided by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Participants meet before dawn the next morning for the trip to the sage grouse lek. Tour fees are paid to the Walden Chamber of Commerce and cover the cost of meals, one night's accommodation and access to State Land Board property.

You make lodging arrangements; the motel will bill the Chamber for your convenience (the cost is included in your registration fee).

For details, lodging information and a registration form, call the Walden (North Park) Chamber at 970-723-4600, or write to northparkchamber@centurytel.net.

Karval Mountain Plover Festival Karval (late April)

Who should go to this festival? Anyone wanting a firsthand, guided experience to see shortgrass prairie wildlife, including Mountain Plovers, Burrowing Owls and swift foxes.

Visit www.karval.org or www.rmbo. org for the schedule of events, registration information and directions.

Bent on Birding Bent County (mid-May)

Activities include a petroglyph tour, Least Tern and Piping Plover viewing, a dinosaur tracks tour, and a chuckwagon dinner at Boggsville National Historic Site. Donations accepted.

For reservations or more information, call 719-980-1320 or email bentonbirding@yahoo.com.

- Marilyn Rhodes

BIRD BUSINESS MARILYN RHODES



Above, Common Redpoll. Photo by Will Burt. Right, Trumpeter Swans. Photo by Marilyn Rhodes



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb. 7	Chapter Meeting	7 pm	Church of the Hills
Feb. 9	GBBC Event	10 am-2 pm	Hiwan Homestead Museum
Feb 10	Newsletter deadline	5 pm	
Feb. 15-18	Great Backyard Bird Count		
Feb 28	EA Board Meeting	6 pm	Church of the Hills

Please submit newsletter content by the 10th of the month to Lisa Wald: communications@evergreenaudubon.org. Contact *Dipper* editor Debbie Marshall with questions or comments: marshallpublish@gmail.com, 303-886-0593.

VOLUME 43, NO. 2. Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 523, Evergreen, CO 80437, publishes *The Dipper* every month. Evergreen Audubon is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Members may receive an electronic copy of *The Dipper* without charge or may pay \$10 a year for a mailed hard copy. Evergreen Audubon encourages readers to submit original articles, creative nature writing or art to *The Dipper*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any articles selected.

Audubon Colorado Office, 303-415-0130, www.auduboncolorado.org

Evergreen Audubon Local Membership Application

I/we would like to join the Evergreen Audubon. I/we may participate in all chapter activities, receive *The Dipper* newsletter electronically, and vote (two Family members may vote) on chapter issues. Dues remain locally.

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If you would like to join or donate to the National Audubon Society

directly and receive the AUDUBON Magazine, use chapter code

C9ZD090Z and call 1-800-274-4201.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Artwork: Sylvia Brockner, Mildred Keiser

Marilyn's Big Year Christmas Count Results Photo Caption Contest

IN THIS ISSUE

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