

the dipper\*

VOL. 45 NO. 1 JANUARY 2015

#### **EVERGREEN AUDUBON NEWSLETTER**

www.EvergreenAudubon.org

# RSVP for annual banquet by Jan. 7

The Evergreen Audubon Annual Banquet will be on Friday, Jan 16, at Mt. Vernon Country Club.

The event starts at 5:30 p.m. with a cash bar, cheese and fruit tray, and silent auction. Dinner will start at 6:30 at the close of the silent auction. The "Year in Review" and award presentations will follow.

The \$38 buffet menu will feature main courses of London Broil, Coconut Curry Chicken and Farfalle Pasta with Roasted Veggies. Side dishes include Herb Potatoes and Wild Rice. An assortment of salads and rolls also will be available. Dessert is an Apple Almond Tart.

Anyone unable to negotiate the buffet can be served.

To contribute an item to the Silent Auction, please contact Irma Wolf at irmasonny@aol.com or call 303-670-3402. Any new or gently used items are welcome.

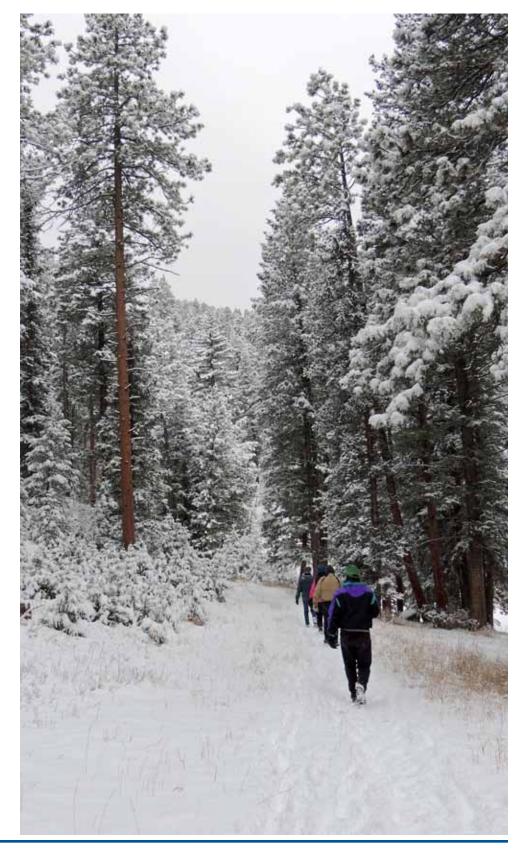
RSVP by Jan. 7, either online at www.EvergreenAudubon.org or by sending payment and registration form (page 3) to Evergreen Audubon, PO Box 523, Evergreen CO 80437.

The Susan Harper-led Evergreen West team worked hard during the Dec. 14 Christmas Bird Count to locate 21 bird species on a cold and snowy day.

The team, shown at right in Dedisse Park, included Jeanette Strom, Bob Holmes, Paul Luzetski and Bill Lybarger, a former Denver Field Ornithologists president who recently returned to Colorado from Texas.

Many other intrepid birders headed into the field for the Evergreen Audubon CBC. Results and highlights will be available in the next *Dipper*.

Photo by Paul Luzetski



#### EVERGREEN AUDUBON www.EvergreenAudubon.org

#### 2014 OFFICERS

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Meetings first Thursday, 7 p.m., Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road, Evergreen, except January. Meetings in June, July and August are held at Evergreen Nature Center.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BRAD ANDRES

Thanks to the 64 donors who contributed \$4,585 to Evergreen Audubon during Colorado Gives Day 2014. This was an 80 percent increase over the average contribution for the last four years.

Colorado donors once again demonstrated unprecedented generosity by giving \$26.2 million to Colorado nonprofits on Dec. 9, the biggest day of giving in the state!

Vanessa, Azalea and I attended a rally the day before, where Gov. Hickenlooper proclaimed Dec. 9 Colorado Gives Day. We put our names in for a \$1,000 raffle, but luck was not on our side.

As January approaches, we will begin preparations for our eighth year of operating Evergreen Nature Center. Through Colorado Gives donations, the annual appeal and the Evergreen Nature Center Bash, you have all helped make the eighth year a reality.

I also thank the board and other members who organize fundraising events including the Bash, banquet, wreath sales, and nest-box sales. I express gratitude to our partners at the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District and Jefferson County Open Space for believing in our mission.

The board will consider restructuring membership and levels of support early in 2015, in case you are wondering why you didn't receive a membership renewal letter.

We will still have a base level of membership, but we want to build in memberships for folks who might donate \$250 but do not specifically fill out a membership form. Not all donors might want to be members, so, as you can see, we need to work out the details.

I also wanted to let you know that we are increasing our payment to support the Colorado Legislature lobbyist that is supported by Audubon chapters and Trout Unlimited. Jen Bolton does a great job and has been effective in her position for a number of years.

Audubon Rockies also supports the position and handles payments from the chapters. We will be paying a fee of \$3 per person on our National Audubon Society membership list (currently at 472 people).

My best to you for the New Year.



Male Cassin's Finch. See Bird Business on page 4 for more local sightings. *Photo by Marilyn Rhodes* 

# Wildlife trafficking—a global conservation issue

Wildlife trafficking is the poaching or taking of protected wildlife species and the subsequent illegal trade in their parts and products.

In the last decade, wildlife trafficking has escalated into an international crisis that affects many countries, whether producers or consumers, across the globe. The increased demand for wildlife products has pushed well-recognized species, such as elephants, rhinos and tigers, toward extinction.

Wildlife trafficking is a criminal international trade worth an estimated U.S. \$20 billion a year. The black-market price for a pound of rhino horn in 2013 (\$45,000) exceeded that of a pound of gold (\$20,800); elephant ivory fetched \$4,600 per pound in Asia.

Many other less-iconic species, such as turtles, crocodiles and birds, are also

impacted by the illegal wildlife trade. For example, a live illegally imported Lear Macaw sells for \$90,000.

The poaching crisis not only takes a toll on wildlife, but it also affects communities. Insurgents and organized crime groups cash in on the money to be made from ivory, killing tens of thousands of elephants while gunning down park rangers who work to protect them.

Tourists visiting parks to view elephants are vital to the economies of eastern and southern Africa, with tourism dollars responsible for more than 10 percent of GDP in countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The current high levels of poaching will likely reduce tourism revenue.

Charismatic species targeted in the illegal wildlife trade are all protected by

the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, which is an international agreement between 180 governments.

However, CITES approved the legal export of more than 165 tons of ivory from four African countries, which had the unintended consequences of resurrecting market demand, particularly in east Asia. The United States was the second-largest market for ivory in the world.

The United States, however, is taking action against wildlife trafficking. President Obama signed Executive Order 13648 in July 2013, which outlined plans to develop a National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking. A ban on commercial sale of ivory was quickly instituted.

Continued on page 6

<b>2015 EA Annual Banquet Reservation Form</b> Friday, Jan. 16, Mt. Vernon Country Club		
Number in your party Contact name and phone number		
Mount Vernon Country Club will plate meals for any guests who prefer	r to be served at their table.	
Names (for name tags). Print first and last names clearly for each guest attending.	Check box for table service.	
	□	
	□	
	□	
	□	
Cost is \$38 per person. Make check payable to EA Banquet and please write "Banquet" on the memo line of your check. Payment must be included with your reservation.		
Enclosed is my check for \$		
Reservations must be received by Wednesday, J	anuary 7, 2015!	
Mail to Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 523, Evergreen, CO 80437-0523.		

### Mid-month snowfall brings in winter favorites

#### Yard Birds

Indian Hills

On Nov. 12, David Walker posted on EvergreenBirders, "Weather brought in first **Evening Grosbeak**, maybe a scout, since eight more showed up an hour later.

"Also a **Cassin's Finch.** Feeders very busy with mix of finches and five of the juncos."

The next day he had three woodpeckers: **Downy**, **Hairy** and **Northern Flicker** (red-shafted).

On Nov. 15, David's feeders remained busy, with new arrivals **American Goldfinch** and **Red- winged Blackbirds**.

A couple of weeks later he had 24 **American Crows** feeding on the ground in his front yard. "That is the most I've ever had and they scared off everything else," he said.

#### Cub Creek Park Area

Karel Buckley shared her concern about the weather on Nov. 13.

"At about 6:45 a.m. I had an adult male **Hairy Woodpecker** on tree outside window shivering, trembling, no kidding, Poor wildlife, this weather takes its toll."

#### Morrison

On Nov. 17, Tracy Spurgeon contacted Susan Harper. "Hi Susan, had six **Evening Grosbeaks** at the feeders this morning,

"I'm from Indiana and this would be late for us Hoosiers. Is this normal for Colorado? Other than this I haven't had anything rare besides bears at the feeders."

Susan replied, "From what I'd been told by one of my birding mentors, the late Bill Brockner, **Evening Grosbeaks** travel North America all year round in search of the best cone crops.

"One winter they might show up in Michigan in large numbers, another year, Colorado, or elsewhere.

"**Red Crossbills** are the same type of migrators. Even weirder, is that because of their unusual migration patterns, they have been known to breed in winter!



Male Evening Grosbeak. Photo by Marilyn Rhodes

"I remember hearing that a nest of **Red Crossbills** was identified at an Evergreen Christmas Bird Count many years ago.

"I observed juvenile **Red Crossbills** in Evergreen during early March just a few years ago. They were calling loudly and when I hunted them down, adults were feeding them!"

#### Red Crossbills Do It Year Round

The photos on the next page of a male Red Crossbill feeding his youngster were taken through a dirty patio window at my Hiwan Hills home on March 23.

My home is situated on an acre loaded with ponderosa pines and a few blue spruce and aspen trees. The birds are perched on a limb near my black oil sunflower seed feeder.

I've had these birds at my feeders reg-

ularly since moving to Evergreen in 1989. Still, I was surprised to see one this young in March.

We had a good cone crop this year and, as a result of this sighting, I've learned that the breeding cycle of **Red Crossbills** is more closely tied to food availability than it is to season.

They can breed at almost any time of year, and will do so even in midwinter if there is an abundant source of seeds.

#### Alderfer/Three Sisters

On Dec. 5, Melissa Leasia shared photos of **Cassin's Finches** in her yard.

She and Todd enjoyed a "peanut fest" that morning, too, attracting about

a dozen **Stellar's Jays** and two **Clark's Nutcrackers**.

#### **Evergreen Lake**

On Nov. 19, Warren Roske reported an **American Pipit** at the lake. These birds were seen at the lake every year from 2006 through 2012 but eluded birders in 2013. Welcome back!

#### Berrian Mountain Park Area

On Dec. 6 Rachel Hutchison reported, "A flock of at least 22 **Evening Grosbeaks** showed up at my feeders today. I saw one scout bird about four hours before the whole flock showed up."

#### **Imperiled Sage Grouse**

Mark Obmascik, author of "The Big Year," posted this on Dec. 10 on CoBirds. Continued on page 5

### BIRD BUSINESS MARILYN RHODES, ASGD MASTER BIRDER



A male Red Crossbill feeds a youngster that probably hatched in February or early March, possibly as early as late January. *Photos by Marilyn Rhodes* 



Continued from page 4

"A sneaky, last-minute rider added to the federal government's 1,603-page spending bill blocks federal endangered species protections to the **Gunnison Sage-Grouse** and the **Greater Sage-Grouse.** 

"I know CoBirds isn't for politics, but it's not for putting our heads in the sand, either.

"Colorado is the last best place on earth for the **Gunnison Sage-Grouse**. "Eight years ago, our state had 6,220 **Gunnison Sage-Grouse** in eight separate areas. Last year, biologists counted 4,773 birds in seven areas. Numbers go up and down year-to-year.

"Colorado has had two decades to protect the bird, but the species remains in deep trouble. Several colonies of **Gunnison Sage-Grouse** have gone extinct in the years that Colorado state officials have promised to protect the species.

"Now that the feds are stepping in, pols in Washington slipped in an unpublicized paragraph this week to head off federal protections of the birds.

"It would be awful to have a homestate species go extinct on our watch.

"There are real conflicts between the **Greater Sage-Grouse** and oil-and-gas development across the West. However, the **Gunnison Sage-Grouse** does not face a similar conflict.

"The **Gunnison Sage-Grouse** once lived in Four Corners areas that now have much petroleum development, but those bird colonies are now extinct."

#### New CFO Website

On Nov. 11, 2014, Bill Kaempfer, president of Colorado Field Ornithologists, issued the following announcement:

"Great news for Colorado birding! The brand new Colorado Field Ornithologists website is now live at http:// CoBirds.org.

This site completes the CFO's website reconstruction project. following up on the previously launched Colorado Bird Records Committee and County Birding websites.

Ted Floyd of Lafayette added, "The site presents tons of updated content, tons more brand-new content, and many exciting new functionalities...For now, here's a conceptual overview:

1. All CFO applications (Colorado Bird Records Committee, Colorado County Birding, and the CFO website Continued on page 6

To contact Marilyn Rhodes, call 303-674-9895 or email cloverlane@aol.com. To subscribe to the Evergreen Birders email list to report and view local sightings, go to www.EvergreenAudubon.org and click on the Local Sightings link.

# Wildlife trafficking—a global conservation issue

Continued from page 3

In summer of 2014, a set of recommendations was delivered by the President's Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking that generally addressed combating trafficking and curbing consumer demand by:

1) increasing effective support for anti-poaching activities;

2) coordinating regional law enforcement efforts;

3) developing and supporting effective legal enforcement mechanisms; and

4) developing strategies to reduce illicit trade and reduce consumer demand for trade in protected species.

If you follow the Royal family, you will know that Britain's Prince William met with President Obama on the illegal wildlife trade issue and sharply denounced the rapid growth of illegal wildlife trading worldwide in a public address.

The Clinton Global Initiative has also taken on the wildlife trafficking cause.

On Nov. 14, 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service destroyed six tons of elephant ivory seized over the years by its special agents and wildlife inspectors in connection with violations of U.S. wildlife laws and treaties.

Elephant poaching is at its highest level in decades and, in fact, now ex-



lvory demand is rising faster than elephants can reproduce.

ceeds the species' reproductive potential. Elephants are being slaughtered across Africa to meet the demand for ivory faster than they can reproduce.

The "Ivory Crush" sent a message to ivory traffickers and their customers that the United States will not tolerate this illegal trade. Since then, several other countries have also destroyed ivory.

You may not realize it, but the U.S.

Numbers of animals remaining in the wild

African Elephant	470,000
Asian Elephant	33,000
White Rhino (Africa)	20,400
Black Rhino (Africa)	5,000
Indian Rhino	3,300
Sumatran Rhino	100
Javan Rhino	44
Asian tigers	3,200



Postal Service has produced a Save Vanishing Species stamp, which depicts an Amur tiger cub. Proceeds from stamp sales are used

directly to save endangered animals in the wild.

Hopefully, this and combined international efforts can quickly de-escalate the rise of illegal wildlife trade.

Brad Andres, EA President

## BIRD BUSINESS MARILYN RHODES, ASGD MASTER BIRDER

Continued from page 5

proper) are integrated so that one login works for all.

2. The site is designed to render well on a smartphone, tablet, or old-fashioned laptop monitor.

3. Nearly all of the content from the old website has carried over to the new site.

4. New content and new functionalities include an events calendar, trip reports, online county listing, passwordprotected access to the journal Colorado Birds, and a lot more.

On Dec. 11, Boulder birder Tom Wilberding shared an experience he had with the new site on CoBirds.

"Here is a tip, in case you didn't

know. Say you read Steve Mlodinow's post yesterday afternoon about his great find of a **Yellow-billed Loon** at Boyd Lake State Park.

"My reaction was, "Hmm. That sounds like a rare bird. I wonder how rare?"

• Go to CoBirds.org.

• Click on Colorado Bird Records Committee.

- Click on Reports from the data.
- Click on Reports by species.

• Type in Yellow-billed Loon, and there you have it: only 25 approved records since 1944, the most recent 6/29/2010 in Gunnison County.

"That's rare. Click on the camera icons to see photos."



American Pipit. Photo by Marilyn Rhodes

### BIRDING BOOKS BILL HACKOS, EA DIRECTOR AT LARGE

It seems strange that I would be reviewing a book for Evergreen Audubon whose title begins with *Flying Dinosaurs*. But all the scientific evidence points to the fact that all the birds are descended from the dinosaurs.

John Pickrell, editor of Australian Geographic, provides a historical account of the evidence.

Pickrell loves to spill out all the unpronounceable scientific names of the dinosaurs. You can read his book in two ways. Either keep track of dozens of scientific names (boring), or just pass over them and concentrate on the history and concepts.

The earliest clue of the link between the dinosaurs and birds came with the discovery of the first fossil of *Archaeopteryx* in a quarry in Bavaria in 1861. This discovery came only two years after the publication of The *Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin.

Archaeopteryx had the wings of a bird but the claws, teeth and tail of a lizard. A contemporary evolutionary biologist remarked at the time about the resemblance of the fossil to that of birds. But the times were not ready for radical ideas. How could our beautiful little birds be related to the fearsome dinosaurs?

Things changed in 1996 with the discovery of a little dinosaur fossil in China with fuzzy down feathers. Since then hundreds of birdlike fossils have been quarried in China.

The problem with these finds is that they are quarried by farmers in the area and are marketed to both collectors and paleontologists. The farmers just crack rocks until they find a fossil, with little regard for science. Much of the scientific value of the fossils is lost.

Paleontologists in China are reduced to buying fossils on the market instead of working on the digs that would provide more scientific information.

Worse yet, farmers who have only a partial specimen resort to combining different fossils. Some in China are highly skilled in the art of counterfeiting fossils.

Despite the problems with the fossil records, modern paleontology finds that dinosaurs, particularly the theropods,



Flying Dinosaurs: How Fearsome Reptiles Became Birds, John Pickrell, Columbia University Press, 2014

were surprisingly birdlike. At least the smaller dinosaurs were apparently warm blooded. They grew quickly after hatching like birds today and unlike modern reptiles that grow slowly over a long period of time.

There now are collections of birdlike dinosaurs that remove any doubt that birds descended from dinosaurs; but how and why did feathers develop? Pickrell gives us three possibilities.

Feathers may have developed for warmth. They may have developed for display similar to display feathers found in modern birds. Or they may have developed initially for flight.

The most plausible reason is for display. Fossils have been quarried that have feathers organized for display like the feathers of a peacock or turkey. These fossils have no other feathers except the display feature.

Some dinosaur fossils reveal a coat of down that might have provided warmth. Flight feathers that have aerodynamic qualities are only found in fossils that have wings.

How did flight develop in early birds? Did proto-birds climb trees and glide at first? Or did flight begin from the ground?

There are no birds living today that are only gliders. Consequently, Pickrell prefers the ground-up theory.

Just like some modern flightless birds and grouse, early birds may have used their wings and feathers to increase their speed or to jump into the air to escape predators. Over time, they may have evolved sustained flight.

Fossils have provided clues to dinosaur behavior similar to modern birds'. Eggs and nests have been found in the Mongolian desert that indicate that mother dinosaurs cared for their young just as modern birds do.

Paleontologists have recently found remnants that yield information on the color of the feathers of dinosaurs, including the iridescence found in some bird feathers, particularly in hummingbirds.

We can imagine the evolution of birds from small theropod dinosaurs. Some small dinosaurs developed a skin covering for sexual display and warmth.

Eventually, this covering on the forelimbs could be used as a survival benefit by providing greater speed when running from predators.

Some developed the ability to flap their forelimbs and jump for small distances, enabling them to escape predation. Eventually, birds developed the ability to fly!

All dinosaurs on earth and most birds went extinct as a result of a mountainsized asteroid striking earth 66 million years ago. Pickrell doesn't provide information about why some birds survived while dinosaurs did not.

Pickrell is easy reading and lots of fun. It's kind of refreshing after working with bird identification books as a birder.

Karel Buckley suggests we try this time-honored bird feeding recipe in 2015..

#### Sylvia Brockner's Bird Pudding

4 parts cornmeal

1 part flour

2 parts suet (melted)

 $2\ {\rm parts}\ {\rm sugar}$ 

Add a bit of water if necessary.

Add grit, insects, raisins or peanuts, if desired, or peanut butter.

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Lvergreen, CO 80437 P.O. Box 523 Evergreen Audubon

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**ВЕТИRN SERVICE REQUESTED** 

# **IN THIS ISSUE**

Local Sightings Wildlife Trafficking President: Record Giving

Artwork: Sylvia Brockner, Mildred Keiser

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Members may receive an electronic copy of The Dipper without charge or may pay \$15 a year for a mailed hard copy (members only). 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 Rockies Office, Rockies.Audubon.org

tor Debbie Marshall and Kathy Madison, EA Director of Communications. VOLUME 45, NO. 1. Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 523, Evergreen, CO 80437, publishes The Dipper every month. Evergreen Audubon is a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Please submit Dipper newsletter content by the 10th of the month to dipper@

EvergreenAudubon.org. Your submissions will be forwarded to both Dipper edi-

Irma Wolf is again running the silent auction at the Evergreen Audu-

bon Annual Banquet. See page 1 for details.

Anyone wishing to contribute an item should contact her at irmasonny@

aol.com or call 303-670-3402.

Any new or gently used item would be welcome.

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Date			
	Individual	Family	
Annual dues	\$ 20	\$ 30	
Electronic Dipper	\$0	\$ 0	
Hard-copy <i>Dipper</i> (members only)	\$ 15	\$ 15	
Additional donation	\$	\$	
Total	\$	\$i	
Name			
Family member(s) name(s)		[	
Address		I	
City	_ State Zip	[	
Phone (optional)		I	
Email			
(must include for electronic Dipper)			

Enclosed is my check payable to: Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box

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

directly and receive the AUDUBON Magazine, use chapter code

□ I DO NOT want solicitations from National Audubon.

523, Evergreen, CO 80437.

C9ZD090Z and call 1-800-274-4201.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan. 7	Banquet RSVP deadline	
Jan. 10	Dipper deadline	5 pm
Jan. 16	EA Annual Banquet	5:30 pm

Silent auction items

Mt. Vernon Country Club

**Evergreen Audubon Local Membership Application** 

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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.