

# The dipper o

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Volume 37

Number 1

January/February 2007

Editor: Peggy Durham Assistant Editor: Margaret McDole

#### **New Officers**

At the Dec. 7 meeting, the following were elected.

**President** Peggy Durham

Vice President Brad Andres

> **Treasurer** Walt Phillips

**Secretary** Carolyn Fraker

Assistant Secretary Kay Niyo

#### **Directors**

Dave Balogh, Ginny Boschen, Jeff Geiger, Sylvia Robertson, David Wald, Bud Weare

### **Digital Dipper**

If you wish to get the *Dipper* online and about a week earlier than the hard copy, please notify Margaret McDole at mem2@ earthlink.net. You can receive the *Dipper* both e-mailed and hard copy; just let us know.

## Recommended Reading

"Living with Bears: A practical guide to living in bear country" by Linda Masterson. This book reminds those of us who feed birds in our backyards and wander trails in the wilderness of smart ways to deal with bears in their own territory.

## Annual Banquet is Jan. 19

The Annual Audubon Banquet will be take place on Friday, Jan. 19, at Mt. Vernon Country Club. Social hour will begin at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.

You will want to make your reservations early because of the outstanding program. We are privileged to have Boyd Norton, author and photographer, as our guest speaker with his multimedia presentation, "Global Hotspots."

He has traveled extensively to diverse

parts of the world, photographed sights from Siberia to the Serengeti, and has written several excellent books related to his experiences. Boyd is an Evergreen resident.

Irma Wolf again will offer a silent auction, with the great variety of items she has assembled. Profits will go to TENAS.

The newly elected officers and directors will be installed during the business meeting. Reservation deadline is Friday, Jan. 12!!!

### Norton Photographs the World

Longtime Evergreen resident Boyd Norton once blew up a nuclear reactor—deliberately! During the 1960s he worked as a nuclear physicist studying reactor safety at Idaho's National Reactor Testing Station.

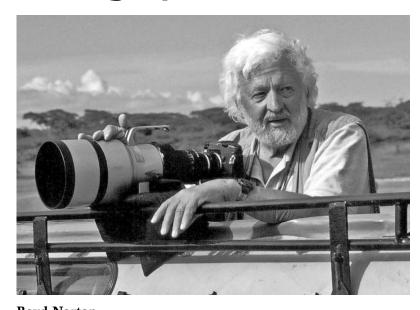
His work was cutting-edge and exciting, but he had a different plan and a passion—saving the world's remaining wilderness with his camera and pen. In 1969 he gave up his physics career to devote himself to envi-

ronmental photography and writing.

Nowadays, Norton travels extensively in documenting the world's wild places and environmental issues, a specialty he has pursued as a photographer and writer for 40 years.

His articles and photos have appeared in most major magazines, including Time, National Geographic, Smithsonian, Audubon, Conde Nast's Traveler, and numerous others in this country and abroad.

He is the author/photographer of 14 criti-



**Boyd Norton** 

cally acclaimed books, the most recent of which include "Safari Journal," "The Art of Outdoor Photography," "Baikal: Sacred Sea of Siberia" (with Peter Matthiessen), "The African Elephant: Last Days of Eden" (Foreword by Richard Leakey) and "The Mountain Gorilla."

He is currently at work on two more books: "The Art of Digital Outdoor Photography" to be published in 2007 and "Seren-

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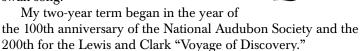


### President's Message

Newly elected TENAS officers and board members will be installed at our Annual Banquet in January, so they are appro-

priately listed in this "double Dipper" issue as the officers and board for the New Year.

However, at the time of publication, the writing of the President's Message still is the responsibility of the outgoing president. Last year this was of no consequence because I continued into a two-year term as your president. Now it is time for my swan song.



These historical events received a great deal of public recognition through special events and numerous publications, inspiring me to discover myself more about their impact on

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	<b>Board of Directors</b>
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Carolyn Fraker	303-679-2799
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Sylvia Robertson	303-674-1715
<b>Bud Weare</b>	303-679-8889

Bud Weare	303-679-8889						
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our natural heritage, some of which I shared with you in my President's Messages.

When you see or hear an Audubon's Warbler or Lewis's Woodpecker or Clark's Nutcracker, my hope is the experience will evoke the historical significance of those names from a naturalist's perspective.

This past year we have had several of our programs presented by TENAS members. I believe that is a good sign of increasing involvement of our members, which is important to the vitality of our chapter.

A particularly satisfying example was the number of contributors of digital photos of excellent quality for the slide-show presentation at the annual picnic. This was made possible by another important acquisition this year: our own digital computer projector. The projector has found several uses already, justifying the investment in this equipment.

Speaking of programs, one of the most interesting was without any visual aids. That was Mark Obmascik's presentation at the annual banquet.

In contrast to Mark's captivating talk of obsessed birders, at our upcoming banquet we can expect an outstanding visual

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- To **Natasha Japp Curran** for setting up and maintaining our website, dipper.org, which allows members and strangers to keep up with our activities on a current basis.
- To **Warren Roske** for again successfully leading the Thanksgiving morning Turkey Trot. His diligence prior to that early-morning birding trip produced the anticipated flock of wild turkeys, making it all worthwhile to assemble in the dark and wait in the cold for the birds to flop out of the trees and parade past.
- To **Marilyn Rhodes**, for again organizing the Holiday Wreath Sale, which provides beautiful wreaths to our members and those lucky enough to be on their gift lists.
- To Walt Phillips, Sylvia Robertson, Marilyn Kaussner, Kent Simon and Peggy Durham for tearing down the library display, which had attracted many library patrons.
- To **Dick Williams** for putting together the Christmas Bird Count slide show/quiz, which prepared us for identifying the birds we are likely to see. Dick did this on short notice since Sylvia Brockner was unable to do it as originally planned. Many of his slides showed birds in their natural habitats, on the wing, camouflaged and distant—all the disadvantages we will encounter during the CBC.



### Banquet Speaker Photographs the World

#### Continued from Page 1

geti," scheduled for early 2008.

He has served on the board of trustees for the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, devoted to saving the last mountain gorillas. He is a director of Baikal Watch, dedicated to preserving Lake Baikal and other wilderness areas of Siberia.

He is the recipient of a special award from the Environmental Protection Agency, presented by Robert Redford, for his "important, exciting environmental photography and writing."

He also has testified before numerous U.S. Senate and House hearings on behalf of wilderness and park preservation bills.

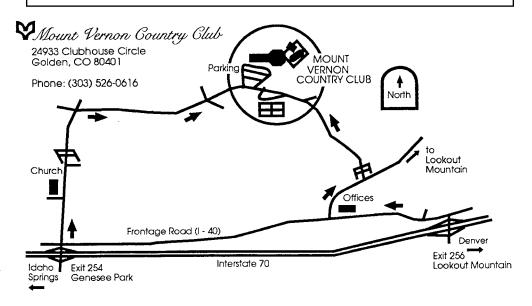
He takes special pride in having played a key role in the establishment of several wilderness areas in the Rocky Mountain region, new national parks in Alaska, and in the designation of Siberia's Lake Baikal as a World Heritage Site.

For more than 20 years he has led photographic and natural history ecotours to such destinations as Tanzania, Peru, Borneo, Chile, Siberia and Antarctica. Boyd will be our speaker at the Annual Banquet, Friday, Jan. 19, at Mt. Vernon Country Club, starting at 6 p.m. Send your banquet reservation in imme-

diately so you won't miss this marvelous program. (See reservation form below or in the December 2006 *Dipper* for more details.)

**Banquet attendees**: You should call Irma Wolf, 303-670-3402, and let her know if you have any "worthy" donations for the silent auction.

Irma will prepare bid sheets for the items, but will ask you to deliver your treasures by 6 p.m. to place on the auction tables, as she will have too many things to haul in by herself.



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	for each guest attending.)	Chicken	Pork	Vegetarian
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### **Bird Business**

The wild winter storm during the last days of November was tough on our birds. It repeated the prior month, October, by being the storm of the last days of the month. The latest storm was worse due to the cold weather with the snow.

Early on the morning of Nov. 29, in below-zero temperatures, a flock of more than 25 American Crows took over all feeders in our neighbor's yard. They cleaned out everything in the yard and then passed into our yard and did the same.

After they left, all the small birds poured in. House Finches and all the juncos were mighty hungry! Mountain Chickadees and two Black Capped Chickadees fought for the peanuts. All the nuthatches came in to claim their share and Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers dominated the suet feeder.

Winter has arrived and fall migration is finished. Some days a few ducks and geese would land on the lake. From early on, ice crept out each night on Evergreen Lake.

Numbers of juncos jumped by Nov. 1. Even the birders were confused. One yard would have a large flock, the neighbor's yard a few or none. What gives?

House Finches are about average, with

not too many Cassin's Finches showing up. I don't know why this finch has decreased around Evergreen.

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers are doing well. All nuthatches and chickadees continue to show up daily and are doing well, too.

The most outstanding bird at the lake so far this year showed up early in the morning of Nov. 15. Sharp-eyed Warren Roske spotted a female Goldeneye at the edge of the ice in front of the old Lake House.

Others joined him and discussions ensued as to which Goldeneye it was: Common or Barrow's. Female Goldeneyes are very difficult to identify.

Warren then took some regular-sized pictures. We all studied them and began to have thoughts of a possible Barrow's Goldeneye.

Down the pike came Dave Jones and his marvelous telephoto lens. He took three remarkable photos of the bird. No doubt! It was a Barrow's Goldeneye. David did it! It actually showed the proper coloring on the bill. Thank you, Warren and David!

One population of Barrow's is in the Bering Sea and in northern Canada. Some

will occur along the Pacific Coast in the winter, generally females. Another population is in eastern Canada and Greenland. Some will winter on the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes.

Nearly every year, a few show up in Colorado. Amazingly, they have been known to nest in Colorado. A few nesting records exist in the Gore Range. They like to nest in cavities of trees. Evergreen Lake is a truly remarkable asset to our town!

Kay Niyo spent the first week of November around Bellingham, Wash., birding. She saw the Chestnut-backed Chickadee and then took a pelagic trip out on the Pacific. She added 11 birds to her growing Life List.

Margaret McDole and Mark Meramonte had a wonderful trip to Australia and New Zealand in November. The birding was outstanding!

Interesting reading! "Birding on Borrowed Time," by Phoebe Snettsinger. This is one of the most interesting books I have read in many a moon! I strongly recommend it. Let me know what you think.

Sylvia joins me in wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

- Bill Brockner

### President's Message

#### Continued from Page 2

presentation with an environmental perspective by Boyd Norton, Evergreen's own world-famous outdoor photographer. Make your reservations early.

Here is another opportunity for interesting viewing. Fireworks Clay Studio in Denver is presenting "A Body of Water" by British artist Christopher Faller.

This is a visual inquiry into our current consumer culture with particular relevance to water and its cultural impact. (This announcement comes from my daughter, Terri, who works with Chris.)

I will be there for the "Eye Opener" Artist Reception on Saturday, Jan. 13. The studio is located at 657 Santa Fe Drive in Denver's rising art district. The show continues through Jan. 27.

Although my term as president is coming to an end, I plan to stay active in TENAS and help where I can to keep this chapter of Audubon one of the best in Colorado. It takes the commitment of many of us to do that.

I certainly appreciate the help I have

had as president from the officers, board members, committee chairs and all the other volunteers who have played a role in TENAS over the past two years.

I will have more to say about that at the banquet—another good reason to be there. Make those reservations now!



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## Sights and Sounds of Mongolia

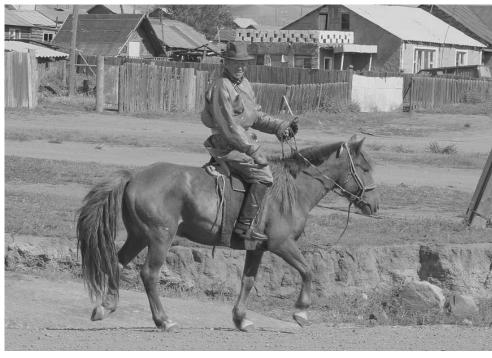
Visit the vast landscape of Mongolia at the TENAS February General Meeting. Located between Russia and China, the land of Chinggis Khan is often called the "last place on earth."

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. 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. It is hoped our talented audience will help identify some of the mystery birds photographed.



Mongolian on horseback. Photo by 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, Feb. 1, at 7 p.m. at Evergreen Recreation Center, 5300 S. Olive Road, behind Evergreen High School. Refreshments and a business meeting will follow.

### Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II to Begin Fieldwork

Fieldwork for the first Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas was initiated in 1987, and the Colorado Bird Atlas Partnership has initiated efforts to conduct a second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas.

Fieldwork will begin in 2007, and the project is expected to take at least five years to complete. Results are anticipated to be produced in three forms: 1) a digital database, 2) a published book, and 3) an Internet document.

If you participated before, consider signing up for the Atlas II; participating in the Atlas will add an expanded dimension to your birding. Besides the volunteer fieldwork, sponsors are also needed to help fund coordination and data compilation.

The Atlas II project is designed to survey two of the six blocks (about three miles on a side) within each USGS 7.5' topographic map in the state (a total of >3,500 blocks).

Observers do not have to find actual nests, but rather assess the breeding status of birds they encountered as confirmed, probable or possible. Surveying an Atlas block is a great way to learn more about the behavior of our breeding birds.

Each block will require about 20-30 hours to complete over a single or multiple years. Field workers need to commit to surveying one or more blocks during the Atlas period. Please contact Tony Leukering (tony.leukering@rmbo.org) if you wish to donate to the project and/or volunteer for some fieldwork.

Copies of the first Atlas published in 1998 are available for your review at the Evergreen, Conifer and Golden libraries. We might be able to offer some behavioral observation training as a late spring field trip.

- Brad Andres



## Ode to the Ordinary

by Mike Foster

"What's that dark-looking bird on the wire?"

"He's got his back to us. I can't tell."
"How do you know it's a he? I see little white spots . . ."

"It's turning now . . . I think it's a robin. Isn't it?"

"Nah! No bird that ugly could sound so sweet."

Actually, it was a starling, and not at all ugly, when you look carefully. We made the ID when it flew from the wire and noted the distinctive shape and flight pattern.

The white spots are part of its fresh new coat, which it begins to wear during winter. An oddity. Most birds assume their new wardrobes (breeding plumage) in spring, when it is time to mate. But by mating time, the starling's white spots have faded away through normal wear and tear.

No less a genius than Mozart admired the musical ability of the European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Mozart's piano concerto in G is based in part on one of those whistled songs. But which song?

The starling has more than 100 different vocalizations, and is constantly improvising new ones. Recently, starlings have been recorded imitating the ring of cell phones!

"But it's just a starling. An ordinary bird."

Winter is a good season to remember the other reasons we love birds and birding. Of course, we're knocked out by the gorgeous colors, fancy songs and lively behavior of our summer residents, most of whom are currently visiting the tropics.

Not a bad idea at this time of year. Wish I could just pick up and fly south for the winter! But I can't, so I watch our winter residents and remember that

birds are more than pretty faces and shapely bodies.

Consider their versatility. House finches will eat buds, fruits, even tree sap, but virtually no insects. Mostly seeds. They swallow stones and other small, hard particles to aid in digesting such coarse, compact materials.

Robins desert our gardens—where we tend to think of them only as worm eaters—then they remember they are thrushes, so they return to more deciduous settings, where they scarf up berries and bugs.

Woodpeckers, regardless of the season, continue to hammer away for hidden treats. Such percussion would render most creatures unconscious, but the brain of a woodpecker is above the level of its beak and is cushioned by the muscles that drive that beak.

Its tongue is often four times the length of its beak and recoils around the brain. When extended, that tongue is barbed and hairy and covered with a gluey coating, an ideal instrument for capturing invertebrates.

Consider their tenacious hold on life: how, regardless of the temperature or wind or snow depth or other natural vicissitudes, they focus unerringly on their sources of survival.

Consider their almost perfect adaptability to flight, from hollow bones and built-in air sacs to lightweight food, lack of teeth (too heavy), lightweight wings (perfectly aerodynamic), spreadable tails (superb rudders and brakes) and feathers (for insulation as well as lift, not to forget awesome displays).

Consider migration and song, to select only two examples, that illustrate a marvelous blending of instinct and learning. And don't tell me birds sing only for such practical purposes as mating, or signaling territory or warning of danger.

Birds also sing for the sheer joy of singing, just as they fly, not just to travel from one point to another, but to experience the ineffable thrill of soaring, flapping, gliding and diving.

This is not anthropomorphism. I can't prove it scientifically, but sometimes even humans know things beyond our ability to explain them. This is also not faith. If you watch birds, you know what I mean.

Consider their magical hold on human imagination, as demonstrated by numerous examples from our art, our literature, our religion and especially our music and dance. Birds remind us of the commonality of all living creatures (the unity of life through DNA), as well as our separate adaptations (the diversity of life through evolution).

Ordinary stuff. Expressed through extraordinary creatures.

Such thoughts massaged my mind and delighted my senses as six of us explored aquatic habitats of Jefferson County on Dec. 9, a day rich in natural ironies, familiar to all Coloradoans crunching through layers of last week's snow in temperatures suitable for spring.

But, pray, what did you see? Just starlings, finches, robins and woodpeckers? Nay, madam, more. So much more. Permit me to summarize.

Twelve species of waterfowl, including all three of the mergansers. Yes, we saw the Red-breasted Merganser, too, first of the season for all of us. Grebes galore. Juncos and kingfishers. Hawks and kestrels. Herons and cormorants. Jays, magpies and crows.

Of course, chickadees, sparrows, gulls, pigeons and the common but oft-confused Buckley's Sora (private joke, for your eyes only, Darlin'). Thirty-one species in all. Did I mention 2,348 geese? But no Cackling among 'em.

We will be repeating this trip—on grounds pioneered in November by Brad Andres, and expanded upon in December by yours truly—in January. Come be surprised. And delighted. And inspired.



### Field Trips and Outings

Sunday, January 28
Ducks around Golden
Leader: Mike Foster, 303-456-2647

This will be a revisit to selected sites that Brad did in November, and Mike did in December. Ducks vary during the winter, so it is interesting to see who is where as the season progresses. Meet at the Wild Bird Center, 32nd & Youngfield, at 8 a.m., where we will return afterward for warm drinks and snacks. Call Mike if you plan to come along.

Sunday, February 18 Guanella Pass, Ptarmigan Ptrek Leader: Kent Simon, 303-674-3017 This trip takes us to timberline looking for ptarmigans and may include pine grosbeaks and crossbills at lower elevations. Dress for the weather and bring water, binoculars, snacks, camera and warm boots. Snowshoes or skis (recommended but not necessary) are great for exploring the willow habitat on Guanella Pass. Meet at the Bergen Park 'n' Ride at 8 a.m. Join us for lunch in Georgetown on the way home, midafternoon. Call Kent to confirm your spot on this annual favorite.

Saturday, February 24 88th Avenue & the Platte Leader: Mike Foster, 303-456-2647 Another good site for winter ducks, plus raptors. Last year we saw Barrow's Goldeneyes here. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Wild Bird Center, where we will return afterward for warm drinks and snacks. Call Mike if you plan to come along.

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

### <u>Membership</u>

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

#### **NEW**

Charlie Ganse-Evergreen Vaughn Hackett-Golden

#### **NEW FAMILY**

Art & Judy Lange–Golden Marty & Robert Lindsay–Evergreen

#### RENEWING

Trish Baker–Evergreen
Bill Burnett–Evergreen
Gisela Henderson–Evergreen
Steven Hoffman–Indian Hills
Kathie Kuehn–Evergreen
Kent Simon–Evergreen
Barbara & Jim Stelzig–Golden
Sonny & Irma Wolf–Evergreen

#### **RENEWING FAMILY**

Sylvia & Bob Robertson-Evergreen Anne & Howard Spery-Evergreen Else & Tom Van Erp-Conifer Fran & Patricia Wafer-Evergreen Diane & Roger Westman-Evergreen Chris Pfaff & Larry White-Evergreen

### Tanzania Safari with Norton

Spaces are still available on Boyd Norton's Feb. 15-28, 2007, safari to Tanzania. For more than 20 years Evergreen author/photographer Boyd Norton has been leading these photographic and natural history eco-tours to Tanzania.

Limited to a maximum of 14 participants, this safari gives an in-depth view of the natural history of Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti National Park, with a special emphasis on wildlife and landscape photography.

Not a photographer? Not a problem. Many people join these trips for the relaxed and unrushed itinerary. For either beginning or advanced photographers, the small group size allows Boyd to give a lot of individual attention for improving photography.

The safari is timed for the peak of the annual wildebeest migration and calving season in Serengeti. Boyd has made more than 40 trips to Africa and estimates that he has spent more than 800 days in the Serengeti ecosystem.

The safari also features deluxe camping accommodations in Serengeti to be near the migratory herds and away from the popular tourist lodges. Driver guides

are all personal friends of Boyd's, handpicked for their birding and natural history knowledge.

For more information, contact Boyd at 303-674-3009 or visit the Tanzania page on his website: www.wilderness-photography.com/tanzania.htm.

### Dipper Handoff

This issue of the *Dipper* will be the last one I edit as I turn it over to Margaret McDole in 2007. I can't think of a better way to learn about TENAS, Evergreen and surrounding towns, fellow members, local birds, and all the activities we undertake.

I have enjoyed doing this job, glad I could give back to TENAS something of use since I have benefited so much in the four years I have been a member.

Margaret and her husband, Mark Meremonte, stepped in and put out an issue a year ago for me on short notice, so it is with confidence that I turn the job over to her/them.

And I thank all the members who have contributed interesting, well-written articles and pictures.

#### Calendar

Jan. 12	Deadline for Banquet Reservations
Jan. 19	Annual Banquet
Jan. 25	Joint Board Meeting
Jan. 28	Ducks Around Golden Field Trip
Feb. 1	Chapter Meeting
Feb. 18	Guanella Pass Field Trip
Feb. 22	Board Meeting
Feb. 24	88th Ave. & the Platte Field Trip
March 10 & 11	Nest Box Sales

#### 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 TENAS website www.dipper.org

The **Dipper deadline** for the **March issue** is **Thursday, Feb. 1.** 

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

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- Ode to the Ordinary
- February Program—Mongolia

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