



TRIPLE BYPASS MARSHALS NEEDED

Evergreen Audubon has been approved to provide volunteer ride marshals for the Triple Bypass bicycle ride this year.

Team Evergreen splits the ride entry fees with nonprofits that provide volunteers.

We do not yet know the exact locations or number of volunteers needed, but we will be looking for eight to 12 people each day on the 11th and 12th of July.

If you are interested in helping out, please contact Dick Prickett, cyclevetd@yahoo.com.

Audubon Rockies VP to speak June 4

Evergreen Audubon, as part of the National Audubon Society, joins with other local chapters across the United States to form one of the nation's oldest and most effective conservation organizations.

But how are programs initiated nationally articulated on the local and regional arenas, in the habitats and landscapes that spark our interest in Audubon to begin with?

How do our chapter's initiatives in citizen science (Bear Creek Breeding Bird Atlas), environmental education (Evergreen Nature Center), and environmental awareness and advocacy (Explore More!, Respectful Recreation) fit in with other Audubon efforts locally, regionally and nationally?

The answer in all cases is Audubon

Rockies, our regional National Audubon Society office. Audubon Rockies' goal is to provide focus and opportunities for chapter efforts on behalf of wildlife and habitat conservation to expand and effect change across the southern Rockies and beyond.

Alison Holloran, vice president and executive director of Audubon Rockies, will present the topic "Audubon Rockies: New Programs and Engagement Opportunities" at our June chapter meeting.

The meeting will be at Evergreen Nature Center (*please note the change in location for our summer meetings!*) on Thursday, June 4. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for a bit of socializing before the meeting starts at 7.

Come see Evergreen Nature Center as we move into our busy summer season

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Explore More: Social Strolls, challenges, badges

Fridays this summer at 11 a.m.

- June 5, meet at Evergreen Nature Center for a walk around Evergreen Lake
- June 12, meet at O'Fallon Park main picnic area
- June 19, meet at Evergreen Nature Center to explore Dedisse Park
- June 26, meet at Stagecoach entrance to Elk Meadow Park

In nature, what feels good is good for you too!

Nature high, nature euphoria, call it what you will, there is a definite joy rush when capturing the view over the hill, basking in the peace of river wind or frozen in awe of a surprise wildlife sighting.

And it turns out that connecting with this primal elation is key to personal health too.

This summer, start a new outdoor healthy habit with Evergreen Nature Center.

Lace up those worn-out sneakers; grab your family, friends, pets or favorite pocket snack and join the Explore More 2015 Outdoor Challenge.



Explore More!

Evergreen Nature Center

Outdoor Challenge

In 2015, there are five challenge categories that run from May 25 to Sept. 7 (Memorial Day–Labor Day):

- 1) Hiking,
- 2) Bird Watching,
- 3) Fish and Wildlife Observation,
- 4) Plant Identification,
- 5) Respectful Recreation/Volunteer Stewardship.

Participants will earn Evergreen Nature Center "badges" for completing basic requirements for challenges.

Each challenge has kid, teen, adult and family prizes.

- 1) Hiking-Most: Sites, Hikes, Miles;
- 2) Bird Watching-Most: Observations and Species;
- 3) Fish and Wildlife Observation-Most: Observations, Animal Families and Species;
- 4) Plant Identification-Most: Observations, Species;
- 5) Respectful Recreation/Volunteer

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2015 OFFICERS

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Vice President		TBD
Secretary	Lisa Wald	303-810-5083 secretary@evergreenaudubon.org
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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

You should have received our annual appeal letter in early May. In the letter, I noted that we have a fantastic opportunity to take Evergreen Nature Center to the next level.

An anonymous Evergreen Audubon member has offered a \$10,000 challenge to build our capacity! I hope you will join me in this challenge to match this donation so Executive Director Vanessa Hayes can continue Evergreen Nature Center's school and public programs and expand and improve our efforts to inspire and educate our mountain community

Like last year, I want to provide you with an overview of our financial situation as of the end of 2014. Our accounts closed the year with \$88,836 in reserve. This is a healthy reserve, which is a level that satisfies our government donors and provides us with a nice cushion to absorb some revenue instability.

Total revenues in 2014 were \$66,517 and overall expenses were \$76,215. The Jefferson County Open Space's Conservation Trust Fund grant that was approved in 2014 is a reimbursable account, and we were unfortunately not reimbursed for \$7,500 in expenses we incurred during 2014.

We received these funds early in 2015, and we have additionally been approved to submit another \$10,000 for 2015.

The funding we receive from the CTF continues to increase. The deficit in 2014 is also due to a decrease in membership (-\$2,905). We decided to focus our end-of-the-year giving on Colorado Gives Day and were able to increase support by 80 percent in 2014 over the average of the past four years. In the past we had combined membership with the Colorado Gives Day solicitation.

Earned revenue from sales, classes and tickets was \$21,576. Total contributed revenue was \$44,941, which came from memberships and individual donations (\$26,742), the Science and Cultural Facilities District (\$15,321), and corporate sponsorships and other grants (\$2,878).

Our expenses fell into three general categories of 1) delivering programs (\$47,785), 2) administering the Nature Center and our organization (\$23,095), and 3) fund-raising (\$5,335).

On behalf of the Evergreen Audubon board of directors, we acknowledge sincerely the generous contributions made by our members, community and government donors across our operating years. Without you, we would not have an Evergreen Nature Center.

Third-Saturday Bird Walk

Join Chuck Aid, Evergreen Audubon director of Bird Monitoring, for its Third-Saturday Bird Walk on June 20, from 7:30 a.m. to noon.

This month we will visit another little-known area, Berrian Mountain, where we will pass through various montane habitats at 8,200 to 8,600 feet elevation.

Bring water and a snack. Meet at Evergreen Library, where we will consolidate ourselves into as few cars as possible for the 15-minute drive.

These walks are for Evergreen Audubon members and their guests. Non-members won't be turned away, but will be encouraged to join Evergreen Audubon. To reserve a space, please contact Chuck Aid, caid@ecentral.com or 303-503-2973.

Try your luck at Dam Duck Derby

Will your duck be the first to successfully navigate Bear Creek and slip into the winning lock at Highland Haven Creekside Inn?

Try one Lucky Duck, or go for a Six Quack!

Feeling really good? Go Totally Quackers!

The Luckiest Ducks win CASH and PRIZES!

The 2015 Dam Duck Derby will take place Aug. 2. This is a fun event for the whole family and the whole town and this year, for the first time, it is an opportunity to raise money for Evergreen Nature Center.

Please help us sell LOTS of ducks!

Ducks are \$5 each, a Six Quack is \$25, a Quack Pack (15 ducks) is \$50 and Totally Quackers (25 ducks) is \$100.

Evergreen Audubon and Evergreen Nature Center will earn \$1 for each duck we sell before July 30.

The Evergreen Downtown Business Association uses the proceeds for race prizes and to sponsor events in downtown Evergreen.

If you can help sell ducks or would like to purchase ducks, please contact Ann at development@evergreenaudubon.org.

- Ann Dodson
Director of Development

Explore More: Develop an outdoor habit

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Stewardship- Loyal steward of one site award; and most: Environmental Volunteer Projects and Hours.

Registration is \$15 per individual and \$25 per family. Each individual and family registration will receive one Explore More water bottle and Explore More journal. (4 journals for each family; additional journals are available \$3).

- Vanessa Hayes
ENC Executive Director



This year's Dam Duck Derby is a chance to raise money for Evergreen Nature Center.
Photo by Ann Dodson

Audubon Rockies VP to speak June 4

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and visit with your fellow members and local naturalists.

Audubon Rockies' mission is to be "a strong, unified voice for an ethic of conservation in the Rocky Mountains, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats, for the benefit of present and future generations."

Through programs such as the Sagebrush Ecosystem Initiative (particularly important for the Greater Sage-Grouse) and Priority Birds of the Central Flyway, Audubon Rockies provides a unified voice for Colorado and Wyoming Audubon members and chapters.

Alison will share her perspectives on the newest efforts that the regional office has begun and provide us with opportunities to engage with the regional office so we can work more effectively to maintain and improve the landscapes and wildlife we all cherish.

Alison graduated with a bachelor's of science in wildlife management from the University of West Virginia and obtained her master's in zoology and physiology from the University of Wyoming. Her master's research concerned the potential effects of gas and oil development on Greater Sage-Grouse on the Pinedale Mesa.

After earning her bachelor's degree, she served two years with the United States Peace Corps as a wildlands promoter in Honduras.

She earned her master's degree and went to work for the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, developing and executing a research plan examining the potential effects of natural gas development on sage-grouse populations.

Alison has been with Audubon for 14 years.

- Ed Furlong
Director of Education



A Greater Sage-Grouse on an ancestral lek west of Walden on Earth Day, April 22. Photo by Marilyn Rhodes

Learn about Evergreen Lake at Youth Skills Day

Youth Outdoor Skills Day is a free annual event that will be held Sunday, June 29, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Evergreen Lake.

Evergreen Nature Center staff will lead nature walks at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Head to ENC to complete a Youth Skills Day passport and enjoy crafts and games.

In addition to ENC, the event is sponsored by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Evergreen Elks, Evergreen Trout Unlimited, Evergreen Park and Recreation District, and other area organizations.

It celebrates fishing, boating, camping, hiking, hunting, exploring and general outdoor fun on Evergreen Lake.

Although the lake is the centerpiece of our community, a lot of area residents are unfamiliar with the many and varied species of creatures that live at or in the lake.

Here is a primer from Marilyn Rhodes, with info contributed by EPRD board member John Ellis.

Common Sport Fish in Evergreen Lake

Brown trout: Historically, the most common species between Evergreen and Morrison, making up about 90 percent of the species present.

These are wild, naturally reproducing fish. They spawn from October through November.

Rainbow trout: Although stocked annually by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, they make up only about 5 percent of the species present between Evergreen and Morrison, due to the presence of whirling disease in Bear Creek.

A program to annually stock a WD-resistant strain was begun in 2009.

Tiger muskie: The tiger muskellunge is a fresh water carnivorous fish, and is the usually sterile, hybrid offspring of the true muskellunge and the Northern pike.

It grows quickly and stronger than the parent fish and they are also less susceptible to disease.

The tiger muskie feeds by waiting near weeds and ambushing its prey. They seem to prefer larger fish during the summer and fall months in preparation for the winter months.



Bob Santangelo holds an 18.5-inch female Rainbow trout. Rainbow and brown trout are found in Evergreen Lake. *Photo provided by Bob Santangelo*

During the winter and spring months they prey on smaller, easier targets due to their slow metabolism. Its varied diet includes trout and suckers along with various other types of fish.

Longnose and white suckers: A bottom-feeding fish, they eat aquatic plants, algae and small invertebrates, which are also food sources of more desirable game fish.

Larger predatory fish, such as muskellunge, prey them upon. In fact, tiger muskie were introduced to Evergreen Lake to keep the sucker population under control.

Grass carp: An herbivorous, freshwater fish species introduced in the United States for aquatic weed control.

Evergreen Metropolitan District, in cooperation with Evergreen Park and Recreation District, installed an aeration system near the dam outlet area to help maintain elevated dissolved oxygen levels throughout the lake.

The two districts, along with Colo-

rado Department of Parks and Wildlife, introduced grass carp into the reservoir with the first release of about 100 fish.

This program reduces some of the excess Elodea algal (introduced invasive species) growth that contributes to the depressed dissolved oxygen problem.

The combination of the aeration system and grass carp program resulted in dissolved oxygen compliance in 2012 monitoring program.

Evergreen Lake is also host to a variety of insect species, including mayflies, caddisflies, stoneflies, dragonflies, damselflies, midges, grasshoppers, ants and mosquitos. (Fly fishermen use hand-tied flies that resemble these natural invertebrates and imitate their behavior when casting.)

These insects serve as food sources for fish in the lake, bats and several species of birds, especially Barn Swallows, Violet-green Swallows and Tree Swallows.

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Join Evergreen Audubon for many valuable benefits

We have a goal of 200 members this year. There are so many good reasons to join:

- You become an important supporter of our project, Evergreen Nature Center.
- You may enjoy all activities and programs at the ENC for FREE!
- You will receive the monthly *Dipper* newsletter, which will keep you up to date on local Audubon and Nature Center events and information.
- You have the opportunity to connect with others in planned activities and social gatherings and will enjoy the monthly chapter meetings, which

feature interesting and intriguing topics and speakers.

- You have the opportunity to participate in fun and educational projects such as the Christmas and Great Backyard Bird counts, bird monitoring, invasive plant control, natural history and conservation education.
- You have the opportunity to vote on chapter issues and support our voice at the regional and national levels.
- Best of all, you support a great and important local effort to conserve and protect our beautiful and diverse natural environment and to foster contagious

enthusiasm and respect for the natural world.

Everyone knows that word of mouth is the best advertising! Please help us recruit new members by talking to your friends and family about Evergreen Audubon. We are getting there, but we need YOU to help us get over the hump!

And, by the way, there will be a prize at the annual banquet for our best recruiter. Just have your recruit mention your name. Forms are available on the website at www.EvergreenAudubon.org.
- Ann Dodson, Director of Development

EA Annual Picnic will be July 18 at Dedisse Park

Evergreen Audubon will host its Annual Picnic at Dedisse Park, Site 1, on Saturday, July 18.

The chapter will provide the main course (barbecued chicken/beef and portabella mushrooms for a vegetarian option), 3.2 beer and non-alcoholic beverages.

To round out the picnic, please bring a potluck side dish to serve 10. To be sure we have variety, we'd like people to bring a dish according to the letter of the alphabet of your last name: appetiz-

Schedule of Activities

- 3:00-4 p.m. Setup
- 4-5 p.m. Social Hour & Appetizers
- 5-6 p.m. Potluck Supper
- 6-7 p.m. Announcements, share birding adventures
- 7-7:30 p.m. Cleanup

ers, board members; side dish, A-K; desserts, L-Z.

Important Details!

- We are asking for a \$10 contribu-

tion to cover the cost of the food, beer and non-alcoholic beverages. Denver Mountain Parks allows only 3.2 beer and does not allow glass containers.

- Please bring your own reusable utensils, plates and beverage cups.

- Bring a lawn chair or blanket in case you do not get a picnic bench.

- Please RSVP by July 14 to Janet Warner, 303-674-1636 or janfrances@juno.com. When you RSVP, indicate if you will help with setup or cleanup.

- Peg Linn, Director at Large

Learn about lake's wildlife at Youth Outdoor Skills Day

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Swallows can be seen skimming the lake and feeding during the day in summer. Bats begin to feed on lake insects at dusk and are often thought to be birds.

Birds and bats have very different silhouettes and flight patterns, though. Spend some time observing both and you'll soon be able to separate them easily.

A few species of reptiles and amphibians inhabit our lake, too. Amphibians found at our lake include frogs, toads, salamanders and newts. Reptiles include snakes, lizards and turtles.

Mammals seen frequently at Evergreen Lake are elk, mule deer, coyote, bobcat, red fox, muskrat and an occasional mountain lion. Beavers once called the lake home.

Remember, always pick up and dispose of fishing line you discard or find so that wildlife doesn't get caught in it or eat it.

ENC and Evergreen Trout Unlimited have provided PVC pipes at the lake for the disposal of fishing line.

26 species recorded at Dawn Chorus

This year's Dawn Chorus on May 3 at Evergreen Lake attracted 27 early risers. Thanks to all who participated, helped set up and contributed delicious food for all to share.

The weather was hazy with overcast sun. Twenty-six species of our Evergreen Lake feathered friend were on hand, including a Northern Rough-winged Swallow and Cassin's Finch, which are not that common at the lake. Collared-Doves are likely expanding to the lake.

The full list: Canada Goose, Mallard,

Double-crested Cormorant, Red-tailed Hawk, Spotted Sandpiper, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Common Raven, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Violet-green Swallow, Barn Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Mountain Bluebird, American Robin, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco (Gray-headed), Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, House Finch, Cassin's Finch, Pine Siskin.

Bird watching focuses on “seeing” birds, identifying them by sight and sound. Bird listening is about learning bird language and using it to learn more about the natural world around you.

In “What the Robin Knows,” we follow Jon Young on an adventure that opens our ears, eyes and minds to a world that is often a surprise.

Young is a tracker and an expert in bird language. He strives to teach us how to follow his example by becoming acutely aware of the conversations going on among birds.

By listening to bird language and learning to interpret its meaning, we can become fully attuned to a heretofore unknown wild world surrounding us.

Young begins by asking us to find a “sit spot,” a regular location from which we can listen and observe. Your sit spot should be a place that you find convenient and easy to reach.

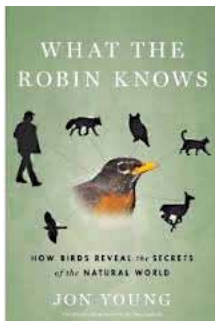
It might be your back porch or under a nearby tree at the edge of a brushy area. It might be a park bench or a comfortable rock near a small stream. But it should be a place from which you can hear birds communicating and watch what they are doing.

You walk slowly and deliberately to your chosen spot, trying not to act as a “bird plow,” which means not scaring the birds into the next county. Young suggests that it takes at least 10 minutes of sitting still for the birds to return to their “baseline” behavior.

Usually the baseline involves regular feeding accompanied by species-specific conversations. He notes, for example, that juncos carry on a very quiet conversation with each other as they feed in a flock. Listen for the soft sounds they make when they are at ease.

We learn from Young how to use our owl vision, deer hearing and fox walking to extend our senses to pick up all the cues from the birds around our sit spot. He tells us to keep a detailed journal of everything we observe. He divides the journal into 10-minute intervals for a suggested 40-minute visit at our sit spot.

“What the Robin Knows” is supported by audio files available from birdlanguage.com. You can listen to the sounds as you



What the Robin Knows: How Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World, by Jon Young, 2012, Houghton Mifflin

Birds have different alarm calls for different threats, like ‘the dreaded Cooper’s Hawk.’

follow Young’s analysis of what the sounds are telling you.

You learn, for example, that birds have different alarm calls for different threats. You might hear one alarm for a Red-tailed Hawk or Peregrine Falcon and another for an accipiter like the dreaded Cooper’s Hawk.

Young points to five different types of vocalizations that birds make. By learning the differences, we can become acutely aware of what is going on around the birds we are watching. The baseline of sounds, the first type of vocalization, occurs in a period of calm.

Young mentions that singing birds are not afraid for their lives. When they are singing, things in the environment are good. Birds, during the spring and summer, will sing from their breeding territories.

The second type of vocalization are the companion calls, little notes that birds make to identify and keep track of their mates or family members. Ducks and geese keep up a quiet conversation. Quail whisper *pwrrt* sounds in time with their steps.

Companion calls help birds ensure that their mates are OK and where they should be. When the companion fails to call back, that means trouble.

Territorial aggression is the occasion of the third type of vocalization. When a bird establishes a territory, it knows every bit of the terrain—all the hiding places, the feeding areas, the safe perching areas and all the local predators.

A true homebody, the bird that knows its territory doesn’t want to move. If another bird tries to move in, the resident will respond with a defensive action. Loud sounds and aggressive behavior mark territorial defense.

If you have young birds at your feeders, you are well aware of the fourth type of vocalization, begging. I’ve watched Mountain Chickadee and Pygmy Nuthatch babies drive their parents nuts with constant begging calls.

They don’t seem to care much about attracting predators; they’re much too busy trying to get more food. Given the phenomenally fast growth of young birds, it’s no wonder why.

Young spends most of his book on the fifth type of vocalization, the alarm call. Birds give alarm calls to notify the community that a predator has invaded and needs to be carefully monitored and avoided.

After he moved his family to Washington State, Young learned the alarm calls of the Pacific Wren. Pacific Wrens are both alert and elusive, rarely caught by surprise.

After he heard the wren alarming, he asked the caretaker if there were any weasels in the vicinity. “Nope,” said the caretaker, “never seen any.”

Well, Young was pretty sure that the wren was alarming because of a weasel, but the caretaker insisted there were none. Then, he noticed eight road-kill weasels on a short stretch of road. Hmmm—what was up? On his property, he and friends finally found the weasel with a nest of young. The wrens knew what was going on.

“What the Robin Knows” is a fascinating book. It makes you want to find a sit spot and pay attention to the bird language around you. I’ve already started paying attention to the robin singing in our front yard. I’ve noticed how its song immediately changes as soon as I step out of the garage.

“What the Robin Knows” is filled with wonderful stories and revelations of interesting behaviors. Young provides a step-by-step guide for how to follow in his footsteps and learn more about the natural world.

Woodpeckers aren't the only Evergreen cavity nesters

Woodpeckers

Here in the Bear Creek Watershed we have six species of woodpeckers that annually excavate a new cavity for each year's nest.

They are the Williamson's Sapsucker, Red-naped Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, American Three-toed Woodpecker and Northern Flicker.

After selecting a tree with the right degree of resonance (indicating heart rot), it generally takes them anywhere from one to four weeks to get their cavity excavated, with some species accomplishing the task faster than others.

For Williamson's Sapsuckers, it takes three to four weeks to excavate a cavity. They almost always excavate a new hole every year, and they have been known to use the same tree their whole life, riddling it with up to 40 holes.

The majority of nests in our area are in aspen with ponderosa pine less frequently used.

Red-naped Sapsuckers also prefer aspen, and often will return to the same tree, occasionally even using the same cavity as a prior year.

Since the two sapsuckers have similar nest-site preferences, it is thought that they avoid competition by selecting nest sites on the basis of nearby foraging habitat.

Williamson's choose nest sites in areas close to conifer-dominated forest that has few aspens, while Red-naped choose aspen-dominated areas.

Downys always excavate a new hole each year, taking about one to three weeks, and the female tends to choose the site. Similarly, Hairys take up to 3.5 weeks.

Both of these species use a variety of trees, though around Evergreen there appears to be a preference for aspen.

Three-toed Woodpeckers chose conifers over aspen, helping them secure a site in close proximity to their preferred food, the larvae of coniferous bark beetles.

They can get their cavity excavated in as little as 10 days, as can flickers, who use a variety of trees, and often use their cavity from the previous year.

Chickadees and Nuthatches

Three additional species also excavate



Black-capped Chickadee. Photo by Alistair Montgomery

cavities for nesting, and, as with the woodpeckers, they too seek out weak or dead trees.

They are the Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Pygmy Nuthatch.

Black-capped Chickadees almost always excavate a new hole, with a definite preference for aspen. If not excavating their own hole, they prefer natural cavities to nest boxes.

Red-breasted Nuthatches also prefer aspen, but will use conifers.

Pygmy Nuthatches only excavate about half of their own holes, preferring ponderosa.

As for Mountain Chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches, they use preexisting natural cavities or old woodpecker holes, often modifying existing

holes but not excavating the cavity on their own.

Secondary Cavity Nesters

Birds such as Mountain Chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches that use old holes created by other birds are known as secondary cavity nesters.

Additional secondary cavity nesters in the Evergreen area include four species of small owls, Wood Ducks, American Kestrels, Tree and Violet-green swallows, House Wrens, Western and Mountain bluebirds, and European Starlings.


A few additional species use natural cavities that were not excavated by other birds.

They include Turkey Vultures, Barn Owls, Belted Kingfishers, Peregrine and Prairie falcons, Cordilleran Flycatchers, Northern Rough-winged and Bank swallows, and Brown Creepers.

Both primary and secondary cavity nesters can sometimes become attracted to using nest boxes, and these may be critical to the survival of species in areas where natural cavities are lacking.

We can see the significant contribution made to the local bluebird and swallow populations by the nest boxes erected by Evergreen Audubon in Elk Meadow and at Three Sisters.

- Chuck Aid
Director of Bird Monitoring



A project of
Evergreen Audubon

Nature-loving Volunteers

Do you love nature, learning and sharing?
Become an ENC individual, couple or family (10yrs+) volunteer today!

Learn more and apply in person or online at
EvergreenNatureCenter.org

2015 New Volunteer Training
Sat, June 13, 10am-12pm
New volunteers also train during a minimum of 2 shadow shifts.

ENC Mission: To foster contagious enthusiasm and life-long respect for the natural world by providing fun and inspiring educational experiences throughout the Bear Creek Watershed.

It's a great year for Great Horned Owls

This has been a great year for **Great Horned Owls**. Rob Raker took this photo of an adult owl, three owlets and an unfortunate rabbit at the owls' Red Rocks nest site on April 13.

Barbara Jean Gard kept an eye on another nest and on April 16 shared, "The owlets at Bear Creek Lake Park are still white and fluffy."

Susan Harper observed a third nest that has been enjoyed by many birders and photographers at Chatfield Reservoir near the balloon launch area. Four owlets occupied the nest in the top of a broken tree.

In the same post on April 25, Susan also reported that, "Two additional nests are far back in the woods with one owlet in each."



Great Horned Owl and owlets at Red Rocks. Photo by Rob Raker

Yard Birds

Pine Siskins

On April 27, Chuck Aid started a chain reaction when he reported, "Just saw my first **Pine Siskin** since back in early December."

Larry White responded, "I've had just a couple of siskins over the past two months. Wonder where they've been?"

Inga Brennan offered, "Maybe at my house? I've had at least a dozen pretty regularly since fall."

Margo Constable said, "I also had one at my thistle feeder yesterday (between Idledale and Kittredge)."

Gail Effron said she has siskins "all the time" in Hiwan. Melissa Leasia added she had dozens of siskins every day during the winter last year, but, "This year we haven't seen a single one. We're just a bit west of Alderfer Three Sisters."

More New Migrants

April 28 was a birdy day for Chuck Aid. He welcomed 26 species to his place southwest of Cub Creek Park, including a **Red-naped Sapsucker** and **Vesper Sparrow**.

May Day, May Day!

On May 1, Chris Pfaff posted an alert, "We just had a vigorous hailstorm for



White-throated Sparrow. Photo by Barbara Klaus

about five minutes followed by a few minutes of sun. During that time I saw my first **Yellow-rumped Warbler** (female) of the year hanging out next to our feeder.

"Today also brought a gorgeous male **American Goldfinch** and numerous siskins, among other visitors, to our feeders."

Double-take

On May 2, Barbara Klaus emailed, "One **White-crowned Sparrow** at my house

(Sun Creek Drive) today, along with the first two **House Wrens** of the season, six or eight **Evening Grosbeaks** and a pair of **Western Bluebirds**. I have also had hummers for about four days."

After reviewing her photos of the bird, Barb amended her call. "The last report was wrong. Not a White-crowned Sparrow. It was a **White-throated Sparrow**. Yellow in front of the eyes.

"I took a couple of pictures if you want to confirm. Never have seen one before, as far as I can remember." You nailed it, Barb.

More New Arrivals

On May 8, David Walker posted, "Yesterday I had two male **Black-headed Grosbeaks** at my feeder in Indian Hills. This morning I had a brief visit from a **Hooded Oriole**."

The same day, Shirley Casey reported a real treat. "Had two male **Lazuli Buntings** at our feeders in north Evergreen yesterday. First time we've seen them on the feeders."

Shortly after the buntings appeared, Shirley saw a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** that stuck around for a while.

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JoAnn Hackos had a nice variety of birds at her Soda Creek feeders the morning of May 9, including **Chipping Sparrows, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Pine Siskin.**

Snow Birds

On May 10, Debbie Marshall questioned her ID of this beauty near the top of Independence Mountain.

“I’ve never seen one before, but is this a **Bullock’s Oriole**? JoAnn Hackos confirmed, “Definitely a **Bullock’s Oriole**. What a terrific visitor.”

The same day Larry White had a snowy and busy morning in and around his feeders: **Gray-headed Juncos, Evening Grosbeak, Red Crossbills, Cassin’s Finches, Broad-tailed Hummers, Pine Siskins, Pygmy Nuthatches, Mountain Chickadees.**

Wild Evergreen

Info and photos by Shirley Casey

Rodents vs. Gardens

In addition to seeing a variety of avian youngsters learning to fly this summer, careful observers will notice young mammal babies exploring and checking out food sources.

Many people notice golden-mantled ground squirrel youngsters as they leave their tunnels and begin to wander around nibbling on tender plants.

People notice them because before there were just a couple of adult ground squirrels, but now there are one or more litters of three to five.

In the early summer, the youngsters may be more visible as they focus on food and exploring—and they may be less aware of risk of predators. As the summer continues, they will be less noticeable as their numbers decrease and they become more careful hiding.

Later in the summer, the young will disperse and establish their own territories.

Some people enjoy watching the ground squirrels and others in the area, and appreciate their handling some of the “pruning.” Others are frustrated when they find tender plants have been nibbled away.

In some cases, these small herbivores are responsible. In other cases, the plants are pruned by elk and deer. Compare the amount of a “nibble” and food needed to sustain a ground squirrel to an elk or deer.

One of the best options is to plant and encourage native plants that are either unappetizing to herbivores or that survive and thrive with such pruning. Such plants often provide essential habitat for native birds as well.

Some people make and apply their own herbivore repellents with a variety of strongly scented liquids that include eggs, garlic powder and cayenne pepper. There are also commercially available plant-based products, such as Liquid Fence and Deer Be Gone, which are sprayed on the plants.



Bullock's Oriole. Photo by Debbie Marshall

Many people prefer to avoid repellents that include predator urine because of humane concerns about how such products are produced.

Some stores sell pellets to “eliminate rodents” that contain rodenticide. The rodenticides not only kill the rodents, birds, pets and so forth that eat the pellets, but other animals that consume the carcasses die of secondary poisoning, including raptors, crows, fox and possibly pets.

The use of live traps allows the rodent to be captured and moved. However, since the habitat attracted and sustained the animal, it is likely that other animals will quickly move into that space, and the cycle would be repeated multiple times.

Plus, the use of live traps requires frequent checking to avoid harming the confined animal that may overheat, dehydrate and become injured trying to escape the trap.

Many of us that have lived in the area for some time have concluded that it was the wild animals’ habitat first and we need to adapt and coexist. That generally means planting wisely, if at all, and spending more time simply enjoying the antics of these youngsters as they explore their new world.



Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel. Photo by Shirley Casey

**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
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 4	EA Chapter Meeting <i>Doors open at 6:30 for socializing</i>	7 pm	Nature Center <i>Summer location</i>
June 5	<i>Explore More</i>	11 am	Evergreen Lake
June 10	<i>Dipper deadline</i>		
June 12	<i>Explore More</i>	11 am	O'Fallon Park
June 13	New Volunteer Training	10 am–noon	Nature Center
June 19	<i>Explore More</i>	11 am	Dedisse Park
June 20	Third-Saturday Bird Walk	7:30 am–noon	Berrian Mountain
June 26	<i>Explore More</i>	11 am	Elk Meadow Park
June 29	Youth Outdoor Skills Day	9 am–1 pm	Evergreen Lake

Please submit *Dipper* newsletter content by the 10th of the month to dipper@EvergreenAudubon.org. Your submissions will be forwarded to both *Dipper* editor **Debbie Marshall** and **Kathy Madison**, EA Director of Communications.

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