



NEST BOX SALE

Evergreen Audubon will hold its annual nest box sale on Saturday and Sunday, March 9 and 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The sale will be held at the Bergen Park and Conifer King Soopers. Safeway corporate headquarters would not grant permission to hold the sale at their stores this year.

Volunteers are needed to staff the sale in two-hour shifts: 9–11 a.m., 11 a.m.–1 p.m. and 1–3 p.m. Please call or email Bud Weare, 303-679-8889 or bweare@aol.com.

EA's premier nest-box builders, Dr. Tom Boschen and his incomparable crew—Ginny Boschen, Chuck Aid, Eric Hogan, Jim Shelton, Tom Thayer and Bud Weare, have completed construction on 90 beautiful new homes.

- Bud Weare

CFO CONVENTION

Colorado Field Ornithologists will hold its annual convention May 16–19 in under-birded Montezuma County in southwestern Colorado.

This year we look forward to a fun and inspiring talk from 2011 Big Year birder John Vanderpoel. Convention headquarters will be in Cortez.

Registration is now open. To register online, go to <http://cfobirds.org> and pull down the Annual Convention tab.

Remember that CFO members qualify for a registration discount. You can join CFO by pulling down the CFO Business tab or you can check to see if your membership is current by selecting Members Login under the Business tab.

Health of Bear Creek Watershed to be discussed at chapter meeting

Evergreen Audubon will host a panel discussion on the health of the Bear Creek Watershed at its March 7 chapter meeting.

Members of the Bear Creek Watershed Association and Evergreen Trout Unlimited will be the principal speakers at this event.

The Bear Creek Watershed encompasses almost 200 square miles, stretching from Mount Evans east to Morrison and from El Rancho south to Conifer. Everyone living in the Evergreen area is affected by the watershed's health, so it's good to know that BCWA and ETU have a special interest in this area.

BCWA is an association of municipalities, sanitation districts and water users who seek to protect and restore water and environmental quality within the watershed, especially from the effects of land use.

ETU is a local chapter of Trout Unlimited, whose mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's cold-water fisheries and their watersheds.

ETU is also known for its youth education activities and promotion of catch-and-release fly fishing. Trout, of course, are a prime indicator of water quality.

Russ Clayshulte will represent the BCWA. Russ has 37 years of experience in the water quality and environmental arenas. He is the director of the BCWA and has assisted its watershed management program

for 24 years. Russ will speak about watershed dynamics, monitoring and managing water quality and challenges facing the watershed.

Mike McGinnis and Ron Belak will represent ETU. Mike is the current president of ETU and will talk about its mission, its water-quality monitoring program and its interface with the BCWA and other organizations that manage water quality.

Ron is a long-time ETU member who will talk about ETU's stream-improvement projects on Bear Creek. Ron has worked in natural resource management for 30 years and is also an Evergreen Audubon member.

- Ron Belak



Redpolls were busting out all over during the last couple of months. This Colorado state record Hoary Redpoll male was photographed by Bill Schmoker at his home feeder in southwest Longmont Dec. 29. See Bird Business on page 4.

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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

It won't be long before the first Mountain Bluebird makes its way back to Elk Meadow. Their arrival, for me, always triggers spring thoughts.

Again this spring, you will have plenty of opportunities to engage in citizen science and public outreach programs. We are looking for volunteers to help with nest-box monitoring, the Bear Creek Atlas and staffing Evergreen Nature Center.

Keep watching *The Dipper* for announcements about these opportunities.

Over this next year, the EA Board will be considering how we can increase the value of Evergreen Audubon to the mountain community while continuing to provide value to our membership. Offering educational, social and recreational experiences for members interested in the natural world and its conservation has been a major function for Evergreen Audubon and will continue into the future.

Proving our value to the greater mountain community requires a bit more thought and perhaps some realigning of the goals of Evergreen Nature Center.

Although the ENC will remain an important destination for members and visitors, it seems we also will need to reach out into the community to become a real asset. Wouldn't it be great if the mountain community "Welcome Wagon" could market Evergreen Audubon and the ENC as assets to attract new residents?

Providing an educational portal to the natural world is an obvious way we can enrich the lives of mountain community residents. Expanding our reach more systematically into the school system would be a way to foster lifelong environmental appreciation and instill an ethic of volunteerism.

Partnering with more of our mountain community organizations is another way we could likely expand our sphere of influence. Beyond providing educational insights, we might also think about how we can assist our neighbors with wildlife conflicts that arise while living in the urban-wildland interface.

We certainly welcome any ideas you have on how we can amplify our influence through increased value to the mountain community.

VIP VOLUNTEERS BRAD ANDRES

Thanks to **Marge Petersen, Irma Wolfe, Joan Ridgely, Jean Thayer, Ginny Ades, Lisa Wald, Kathy Madison, Marilyn Kaussner and Juanita Weare** for organizing a great Evergreen Audubon Annual Banquet.

Also, many thanks to **Dave Leatherman** for his informative and entertaining talk on the food habits of birds.

Members' contributions recognized at banquet

President's Award— Royal Order of the Dipper

From the first opening of the warming hut's doors as the Evergreen Nature Center, Royal Order inductees **Carmon Slater** and **Donald Randall** have shared Evergreen Audubon's vision of the Nature Center as a community resource.

You can't look anywhere in the Nature Center without seeing a creation Carmon made or influenced. His work has added a unique mountain touch that is appreciated by all our visitors. The beautiful panels created by Philip Newsom were the result of Carmon's effort.

Carmon and Donald are the ones who found a way to get Heather the mountain lion from Miami, Fla., to the wall of Evergreen Nature Center.

As you look around the Nature Center, you have a good chance of spying Donald explaining the touch table to visitors. As a longtime volunteer fixture at the Nature Center, he knows the ins and outs of its operation.

We have come a long way with the Nature Center from discussions we had on Donald and Carmon's deck in 2007. We offer our thanks to them for con-

tributing to Evergreen Nature Center's success.

Our other inductee into the Royal Order of the Dipper, **Sherman Wing**, has a hard time staying inside. It always seems he is out birding somewhere . . . in the Bear Creek Watershed, western Colorado or western Mexico.

Often he brings along an entourage of longtime birding friends and never rejects newbies. He plans how to use his team to cover the area efficiently and effectively.

Sherman is always verifying his identification and has sent around numerous photos of his great finds. The Christmas Bird Count lasts only a day, so it is easy to keep up the enthusiasm.

However, participating in the Bear Creek Watershed Breeding Bird Atlas and the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas takes a higher level of commitment.

Sherman has logged more than 215 hours participating in the Bear Creek Atlas. Thanks to Sherman for his contributions to Evergreen Audubon's bird-monitoring projects.

Bird of the Year 2012

If you read the January *Dipper*, you

probably have an inkling of the no-brainer Bird of the Year for the Bear Creek Watershed.

Although the Brambling is a regular Alaska vagrant, it breeds in Asia. The first-year male found by **Mike Henwood** at Bear Creek Lake Park in November was only the third Colorado record.

Mike is an avid birder who regularly polices Red Rocks and Bear Creek Lake parks for good birds. For example, he has turned up birds like Harris Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Curve-billed Thrasher that many of us subsequently chased down.

Mike is quick to share his observations with the birding community and is always eager to foster birding enthusiasm in others. He is a careful observer and is ever honing his own skills. He is infatuated with owls and has dragged Evergreen Audubon members through the middle of snowy nights in March chasing Saw-whet and Pygmy owls in our nearby parks.

Many of you may not realize that Mike was one of the top 10 contributors to the Bear Creek Breeding Bird Atlas. Congratulations to Mike.

- Brad Andres

CONSERVATION CHUCK AID

Background

A consortium of water districts has requested storage of additional water in the reservoir at Chatfield State Park. This additional water would increase its maximum water level by 12 feet over the current maximum, and significantly expand its footprint.

In addition, water levels could fluctuate by as much as 21 feet, creating a cycling between flooded forests in some years, and extensive mud flats during others.

All this would decimate the riparian gallery forest and adjacent woodlands along Plum Creek and the South Platte River, and significantly diminish the community of birds presently found there.

Currently

The Chatfield Reallocation Project has

been promoted as a "private" water project, that is, one that doesn't use taxpayer dollars. Now, it appears that a good deal of public money (coming from severance tax revenues) will be involved.

The project also has been promoted as a way to enhance flow in the South Platte River downstream.

However, the Corps of Engineers' analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement indicates that there would be "zero dependable yield" (Appendix BB of the DEIS).

This brings up an important question: Should the state be spending public dollars on a project that will substantially damage a premier state park, that has questionable value for increasing water supplies, and whose benefits are increasingly suspect?

At this point, we are waiting for the Final Environmental Impact Statement, which will probably be issued late in 2013.

Meanwhile, there will be one more opportunity for public comment.

Once the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission, in conjunction with the Chatfield Water Project proponents, has agreed on a mitigation plan, the commission will take public comment at one of its regularly scheduled meetings.

Notice of this will be on the commission agenda, available at www.wildlife.state.co.us.

Please stay involved and help save Chatfield State Park from the bulldozers. If you have not done so, go to <http://signon.org> and search for the Save Chatfield State Park petition.

Redpolls invade Jefferson and Clear Creek counties

On Jan. 14, Bob Santangelo reported something very exciting at his feeders. “I have a small flock of eight or so **Common Redpolls** regularly visiting my feeders in Wheat Ridge,” he said.

On Jan. 18, Bob posted an update: “The Redpoll-looza continues daily—I think the flock has increased by a few birds and I am seeing a lot of orange-variant individuals.

“I have added a couple more thistle feeders out front and warmer temps allow me to add more water to the unheated birdbaths. Birds seem to be most enthusiastic around 8 a.m. when the sunlight is good.”

The redpolls continued to appear through Feb. 10, the date of this writing, and a number of birders took Bob up on his offer to stop by and see the birds, including two nuns in “full uniform.”

Bob passed along this comment from one of his neighbors: He said there have been a lot of birders stopping by and one birder had set up a nice scope and very politely let him take a look. He was excited to see for the first time, birds in great detail, and greatly admired how beautiful they were.

“It is always nice to hear about someone else’s ‘moment of discovery’ and whoever this ambassador of the birds was deserves kudos,” Bob said.

I had an opportunity to see the redpolls at Bob’s house on Jan. 12. In addition to the many **Common Redpolls** we saw mixed in with the flock of **American Goldfinches**, we observed at least one “orange-variant.” The eBird moderator deemed it a **Common/Hoary Redpoll** and probably an immature male.

After watching the redpolls on Jan. 12, Bob and I went to Prospect Park to check out a male **Mandarin Duck** that has been reported there since early 2011. A presumed escapee, he is free-flying and a beautiful specimen. He has been hanging out with and pursuing a female **Mallard**.

On Jan. 17, JoAnn and Bill Hackos stopped by Bob’s home. They spotted two **Common Redpolls** at the feeders



Northern Saw-whet Owl hanging out in Littleton. Photo by Marilyn Rhodes

along with **American Goldfinches** and lots of **House Finches**.

They, too, went on to Prospect Park in Wheat Ridge after stopping at Bob’s and spotted six **Red-breasted Mergansers**. The week before, they had **Common** and **Hooded Mergansers**.

On the lake they saw **Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Common Goldeneye, Coots, Mallards, Gadwalls, Ring-billed Gulls** and a **Belted Kingfisher**. The lake was still mostly frozen and Tudor Pond was completely frozen.

On Jan. 19, I had 4 **Common Redpolls** at my feeders in Hiwan Hills.

The redpoll sightings continued on Jan. 28, with Ruth Brown of Idaho Springs notifying JoAnn Hackos by email:

“My husband and I live at 9,500 feet, Blue Valley, Idaho Springs. We are still seeing **Common Redpolls** daily, a dozen to 20 birds at a time on our feeders. We had much larger flocks about two weeks ago.

“Also, we had HUGE flocks of the **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch**. We are seeing a few at a time now, but within

the past month, we had flocks of 100-plus. They would circle around the house and then land en masse. It was an amazing sight.

“We see lots of **Pine Grosbeaks**, and an occasional **Evening Grosbeak** (saw more **Evening Grosbeaks** last year), and lots of other birds.

“Visitors are welcome. Feeders are only visible from our living room but that is OK; we welcome visitors!! We have a great view of the Continental Divide.”

On Feb. 2, JoAnn and Bill visited the Browns and saw **Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill** and **Common Redpoll** at their feeders.

Fort Collins Museum of Discovery
On Jan. 20, JoAnn Hackos and I traveled to Fort Collins to view the flock of 100-plus redpolls that had been reported there for weeks. We ran into Dick Prickett when we got there.

Most of the birds we saw were **Common Redpolls** but we had three or four good candidates for **Hoary Redpoll**.

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Continued from page 4

The Colorado state record **Hoary Redpoll** was reported Dec. 29 by Bill Schmoker at his home feeder in southwest Longmont.

I went to Fort Collins again on Jan. 27, this time with Bob Santangelo, and we got good looks at several other potential **Hoary Redpolls**. The eBird moderator has confirmed that my photo (right) is of a female **Hoary Redpoll**.

While in Fort Collins, Bob and I followed up on a COBirds post and searched for **Bohemian Waxwings** that had been seen in a flock with **Cedar Waxwings** in a residential neighborhood near Long Pond. We didn't see any **Bohemians** but got some good looks and shots of the **Cedars**.

Out and About

Upper Bear Creek

I received a call from John Alston reporting a **Northern Pygmy Owl** in Evergreen.

It was seen late-morning near the feeders at his home on Upper Bear Creek, around mile marker two, on Jan. 12.

Littleton

A report was posted to COBirds on New Year's Day about an owl seen in a residential neighborhood in Littleton by John Hammer, who lives near C-470 and Platte Canyon Road.

The man reporting the owl had been having trouble with heavy amounts of bird droppings on his mailbox since this summer and, tiring of it, went to chase the bird out of his pine tree.

To his surprise, it was a little owl perched about 8 feet up on a limb. A picture confirmed a **Northern Saw-whet Owl**. He thinks the same bird has been there since this summer because of the continued droppings at the same site.

The bird lets him get a close look, which he has been doing a couple of times a day. The man welcomed a few visitors to see the owl but wanted to keep interaction and interference to a minimum.

He dissected a couple of little owl

pellets and they were full of mice. He noted that he hadn't had the normal influx of mice this fall!

In early February, the man noted seeing the owl in his yard in Littleton only about 1 out of every 5 days, as opposed to daily as had been the case before people started watching him.

Because of this, he requested that visits be stopped for now.

He has constructed a nesting box according to specifications from Scott Rashid of Estes Park, author of "Small Mountain Owls," and would love to have little, bouncing baby saw-whets! Fortunately, I saw and photographed the owl before he curbed visitors.

Lair o' the Bear

On Feb. 9, Sherman Wing saw what he thought was a **Pacific Wren** at Lair o' the Bear.

It was upstream from the eastern footbridge, near the bench by a big cottonwood tree. He also saw and heard a **Dipper** singing.

Chuck Aid reported seeing what was probably the same wren a few days earlier. Chuck got a good look at the bird and ID'd it as a **Winter Wren**. Sherman got only a brief look at the bird and no photograph.

In July 2010, **Winter Wren** was split into two distinct but closely related wren species: **Pacific Wren** of the West; and **Winter Wren** of the East.

This means that birders are now reporting two different species of wrens in North America when just a couple of



Marilyn Rhodes scored quite a coup when she managed to pick out a female Hoary Redpoll (top left) from a flock of more than 100 jittery birds in Fort Collins Jan. 27. The other birds in the photo are Common Redpolls. Photo by Marilyn Rhodes

years ago they were all known as a single species: **Winter Wren**.

These birds are very similar, so I'm hopeful that more folks will get a look and perhaps photos of the bird so we can make a positive ID.

Glenwood Springs

On Jan. 24, Sherman Wing saw a **Northern Shrike** in Glenwood Springs.

Pawnee Grasslands

Karel Buckley and Kathanne Lynch ventured up to Fort Collins Feb. 9 for the 2013 Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory Winter Raptor Tour at Pawnee Grasslands.

Big sightings for the day were a **Golden Eagle** pair, a dark phase **Ferruginous Hawk** and a **Prairie Merlin**.

They ended the day by running over to the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery to check out the redpolls.

Monte Vista

Don't miss the 30th Annual Monte Vista Crane Festival, March 8-10.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 7	Chapter Meeting	7 pm	Church of the Hills
March 9–10	Nest Box Sale	9 am–3 pm	Bergen & Conifer King Soopers
March 10	Newsletter deadline	5 pm	
March 28	EA Board Meeting	6 pm	Church of the Hills

Upcoming Event:

April 20 Nature Center opens for season!

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.

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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.

Date _____

	Individual	Family
Annual dues	\$ 20	\$ 30
Electronic <i>Dipper</i>	\$ 0	\$ 0
Hard-copy <i>Dipper</i> (members only)	\$ 15	\$ 15
Additional donation	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____	\$ _____

Name _____

Family member(s) name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email _____

(must include for electronic *Dipper*)

Enclosed is my check payable to: **Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 523, Evergreen, CO 80437.**

I DO NOT want solicitations from National Audubon.

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.

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