



# THE DIPPER

VOL. 44 NO. 3  
MARCH 2014

EVERGREEN AUDUBON NEWSLETTER

[www.evergreenaudubon.org](http://www.evergreenaudubon.org)

## NEST BOX SALE

Evergreen Audubon will hold its annual nest box sale on Saturday and Sunday, March 8 and 9, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The sale will be held at the Bergen Park and Conifer King Soopers stores.

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](mailto:bweare@aol.com).

EA's talented nest-box builders, Tom Boschen and his crew—Ginny Boschen, Chuck Aid, Brad Andres, Jim Shelton, Tom Thayer and Bud Weare, have completed construction on 90 beautiful new homes to be sold.

- Bud Weare

## BEST NEW BOOK

"The Warbler Guide" enables you to quickly identify any of the 56 species of warblers in the United States and Canada. This ground-breaking guide features



more than 1,000 stunning color photos, extensive species accounts with

multiple viewing angles, and an entirely new system of vocalization analysis that helps you distinguish songs and calls.

- Marilyn Rhodes

See page 7 for the inaugural edition of JoAnn Hackos' Birding Books column. Featured this month: "The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors."

## Lots of buzz at next chapter meeting

Did you know that there are more than 550 species of native bees along the Front Range? This astonishing diversity of bees is comprised mostly of bees that are much like birds in their natural history.

These bees are solitary nesters that take much time and care in the creation of homes for their brood, and different species even use different kinds of nesting materials.

About one-third of solitary nesting bees in Colorado use cavities excavated in dead wood by previous occupants, much like secondary cavity-nesting birds.

Join Virginia Scott, Colorado bee expert and entomology collection manager at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, and Alexandra Rose, CU Museum citizen-science program manager, at the March EA chapter meeting to learn about the biology and nesting behavior of local bees.

They'll also talk about the second season of The Bees' Needs citizen-science project ([beesneeds.colorado.edu/](http://beesneeds.colorado.edu/)) and



*Megachilidae and nest. Photo by Gilles San Martin*

how you can get involved in helping understand how landscaping decisions that we make as communities and individuals impact native bee and wasp diversity.

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## Hiwan Homestead hosts GBBC event

On a balmy, blustering Feb. 15, Evergreen Audubon volunteers gathered at Hiwan Homestead Museum to celebrate the worldwide Great Backyard Bird Count with local families.

Evergreen Audubon's GBBC event added 117 birds of 14 different species to international GBBC totals.

Working among the beautiful artifacts and exhibits at the museum, the volunteers used silhouette ID and biophony/bird song games to playfully train guests to notice characteristics of backyard birds.

Crafts including bird marionette building were just plain fun.

(Editor's note: Biophony refers to the collective sound that vocalizing non-human animals create in each given environment.)

Guests of all ages learned the dos and don'ts of backyard bird feeding and watch-

ing, the basics of winter bird identification and how to easily participate in one of the most inclusive citizen-science projects in the world, the annual Great Backyard Bird Count.

Outside, families embarked on a guided scavenger hunt through the ponderosa pine grove surrounding the museum.

Soaking in the sights and sounds of local Pygmy Nuthatches, Mountain Chickadees, Steller's Jays, 75 American Crows and more, visitors were prompted to throw seeds, watch trees for bird visitations and gather hands-on experience.

All in all, it was a lovely day to learn about birds for a cozy group of just under 30 volunteers and guests.

We look forward to growing the event for next year!

- Vanessa Hayes  
ENC Executive Director

**EVERGREEN AUDUBON**  
www.evergreenaudubon.org

**2013 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

March is a time of transition from participating in winter bird activities, such as the Christmas Bird Count and Great Backyard Bird Count, to readying for the upcoming breeding season. Great Horned Owls will soon be hatching chicks and the first bluebirds will be making their reappearance in Elk Meadow.

We will be there to greet the bluebirds, and I hope you can join our nest-box monitoring project in 2014. Please drop me a note if you would like to participate. As is customary, we will be selling nest boxes to the public the weekend of March 8.



*Mountain Bluebird. Photo by Alistair Montgomery*

This spring there will also be a temporary transition at Evergreen Nature Center. If you haven't heard, Vanessa and Gavin are expecting a baby in June. As a result, we will be hiring a temporary assistant director to fill in for Vanessa during her maternity leave.

I am also hoping I can rely on our members to volunteer time at the Nature Center to ensure we have another successful season. We are pursuing other grants to add hours to this position to make it more attractive.

In May, Kit Darrow will be leaving the Evergreen Park and Recreation District board of directors, as she has fulfilled her two-term limit. Kit has been a solid supporter of Evergreen Nature Center since its inception, and we thank her for her service and support.

The good news is that Peggy Linn and John Ellis have stepped forward to enter the race for rec board. Stay tuned for details on the upcoming election in May and a reminder to EPRD residents about getting out to vote,

Lastly, we would like to transition some of the work of individual directors to a more member-inclusive committee model. At the moment, we are looking for interested members to participate on committees for: 1) education/ENC, 2) communications, and 3) development. Please let me know if you are interested in contributing to these committees or contact the appropriate board member.

**VIP VOLUNTEERS** BRAD ANDRES

- Irma Wolf wishes to thank all those whose donated items to the silent auction at the EA Annual Banquet, and everyone who helped her set up the auction items. It was a big success, earning approximately \$800.

- Brad Andres added his thanks for help with the banquet to **Irma Wolf, Joan Ridgely, Marge Petersen** and **Sylvia Robertson**.

# March chapter meeting should create lots of buzz

Continued from page 1

Scott's work with solitary wood-nesting bees began in 1983, in the meadows of upper Michigan while observing a bee, nicknamed R-2, for 10 days straight.

She continued with that study for a decade, during which time she completed her master's degree in entomology at Michigan State University, studying the biology of wood-nesting *Hylaeus*.

In 1994, she moved to Colorado. She collected bees locally by trap nesting during the summers of 1994 and 1996.

Those specimens serve as the basis for *The Bees' Needs*, which may inspire others to learn more about native bees.

In 2011 she was lead author on "The Bees of Colorado," available for free

download at [cumuseum.colorado.edu/bees-colorado](http://cumuseum.colorado.edu/bees-colorado).

Dr. Rose has a doctorate in ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of California-Santa Cruz, where she studied Tree Swallows for her dissertation. She relied on an entirely volunteer workforce of field assistants.

After graduate school she taught for three years at the University of Wyoming. She and her husband moved to Boulder in 2012.



*Hoplitis fulgita* male. Photo by Diane Wilson

Although she's primarily a bird biologist, Rose has experience working with a variety of species, including white-tailed deer, small mammals and even polar bears.

The next chapter meeting will be held Thursday, March 6, at 7 p.m. at Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road (across from Evergreen Library) in the downstairs Fellowship Hall.

- Kathy Madison  
Director of Communications

## Temporary Assistant Director Evergreen Nature Center

Application Deadline: March 10, 2014

Temporary, part-time position  
May 9–Oct. 12, 2014. 20-27 hours/week at \$17/hour.  
Weekend and evening hours required.

### Position Description

**Please visit [evergreenaudubon.org](http://evergreenaudubon.org) for a full job description.**

Evergreen Audubon seeks a temporary Assistant Director for Evergreen Nature Center during the 2014 operating season. The Assistant Director will train along side the Executive Director in May and June and assume responsibility as acting Director from July to September, while the Executive Director is on maternity leave.

### Key Responsibilities

- Train and serve as Assistant Director during Evergreen Nature Center's 2014 season, following and expanding upon a defined seasonal work plan.
- Coordinate, train and educate Visitor Assistant volunteers to staff Evergreen Nature Center as needed.
- Lead, co-lead and organize group programs 30 to 120 minutes in duration for children, youth and adults.
- Oversee Nature Center administration and maintenance.

### Qualifications

- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Education, Natural Resources, Biology or similar area
- 3+ years experience in Environmental Education and/or Interpretation and volunteer coordination
- Knowledge of local ecology highly preferred
- Demonstration of dependability and organization in previous employment
- Current CPR and First Aid certification

### To Apply:

Send resume, cover letter and three references to Vanessa Hayes at [enctdirector@evergreenaudubon.org](mailto:enctdirector@evergreenaudubon.org).



After months of relative inactivity, a flurry of bird sightings came in just as we were going to press this month.

From the submissions, I gather several of our members have been busy collecting species for the “2014 Bear Creek Watershed Birding Challenge,” which Brad Andres announced in the January newsletter.

The Challenge started Jan. 1, so if you haven’t started ticking off birds this year, you’re already falling behind!

### Yard Birds

On Jan. 28, Shirley Casey wrote, “During yesterday’s snow, we were trying to focus the camera on the **Cooper’s Hawk** that had snagged a small passerine—when a **Black-billed Magpie** approached him/her.” The hawk proved unwilling to share.

### Lair o’ the Bear

Sherman Wing saw five **Clark’s Nutcrackers** on the hillside at the west end of the park, across the stream from the “castle” event center on Jan. 26.

### Red Rocks

On Feb. 1, Sherman birded Red Rocks and reported one **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** in a plethora of **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **House Finches**.

At Lair o’ the Bear, he had one **North-ern Shrike** in the cottonwoods near the bathroom.

On Feb. 9, Sherman went back to Red Rocks late in the day and saw a pair of **Great Horned Owls** in a small cavern on the red rock wall across from the Trading Post.

JoAnn and Bill Hackos birded Red Rocks Feb. 9, in brisk 23-degree weather with fog. (At Genesee it was 47 degrees.)

JoAnn reported **Scrub Jay**, **Townsend’s Solitaire**, **Black-billed Magpie**, **Oregon Junco**, **Slate-colored Junco**, **Pink-sided Junco**, **Gray-headed Junco**, **American Tree Sparrow**, **Song Sparrow**, **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, **White-crowned Sparrow**, **House Sparrow**, **House Finch**, **Spotted Towhee** and **Black-capped Chickadee**.

Susan Harper, Bob Holmes and Jeanette Strom were also at the park that



*American Kestrel, Red Rocks, Feb. 9. Photo by Susan Harper*



*Rosy-Finches (all three species) clog up a tree near Squaw Pass on Feb. 9. Photo by Sherman Wing*

morning. They saw 17 species, mostly car birding.

Highlights included a beautiful male **American Kestrel** guarding his normal territory, a few hunched-over **Townsend’s Solitaires**, a lone **Cedar Waxwing** and many **Dark-eyed Juncos**.

There were a couple of **Black-capped Chickadees** singing their mating call.

### Squaw Pass

JoAnn and Bill visited friends at 9,500 feet off Squaw Pass Road on Feb. 7.

They had some nice birds there: **Brown-capped Rosy-Finch flock**, **Clark’s Nutcracker**, **Cassin’s Finches**, **Black-capped Chickadee**, **Mountain Chickadee**, **Pine Siskin**, **Juncos** (mostly **White-**

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winged), **White-breasted Nuthatch**, **Steller's Jay**.

## South Platte

EA member Chris Pfaff also was in the field Feb. 9, taking Mike Foster's Ducks

and Winter Birds class with a field trip to the South Platte and 88th Avenue.

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On Feb. 2, Chuck Aid sighted an unusually large number of species in the vicinity of his house just southwest of Cub Creek Park. He saw 15 species in the snow-covered area, including two **CLNU**, one **ATTW**, five **CAFI**, 18 **PISI** and five subspecies of **DEJU**.

Chuck identified the birds with the alphabetic ("alpha") codes used when banding birds. See below for information on how the codes are derived, then try to figure out the birds Chuck saw.

Correct IDs are at the end of this Bird Business column.

## American Ornithologists' Union Alpha Codes for Birds

by Ira Runyan

Alpha codes are an attempt to standardize abbreviations of common bird names to four or six letters as shorthand when entering data about birds.

It is particularly useful when a database is being constructed and needs to be indexed in order to locate data. It is not very useful in identifying a bird if you don't know the bird's English common name in the first place.

The U.S. Bird Banding Laboratory has long used alpha codes in banding data, and these codes have become an integral part of large ornithological programs across Canada and the United States. Bird Banding Lab codes were introduced in the year of 1978. The basic rules for the four-letter alpha codes of the Bird Banding Lab were as follows.

1. If the name consists of only one word, the code is taken from the initial letters, up to four:

DUNL    Dunlin  
GADW    Gadwall

2. If there are two words in the name, the code is made from the first two letters of each word:

AMWI    American Wigeon  
EAME    Eastern Meadowlark

3. For three-word names where only the last two words are hyphenated, the code uses two letters from the first word and one each from the last two:

EASO    Eastern Screech-Owl  
WEWP    Western Wood-Pewee

4. For other names with three words, the code takes one letter each from the first two words and two from the last word:

RTHA    Red-tailed Hawk  
WWCR    White-winged Crossbill

5. For four-word names, the code takes one letter from each word:

BCNH    Black-crowned Night-Heron  
NSWO    Northern Saw-whet Owl

Inconsistencies have occurred in the rules governing the alpha codes of the BBL. Therefore, a new set of four-letter (for English common names) and six-letter (for scientific names) species alpha codes were developed by Pyle and DeSante (2003) in a rigorous manner, to reflect American Ornithologists' Union taxonomy and nomenclature.

A total of 2,083 bird species recorded from the AOU area (according to the AOU's 53rd supplement) are included in the new set of alpha codes. These codes have been updated several times since 2003, and I'm sure further revisions will occur in the future.

When posting a bird sighting, it is best to ID the bird for your readers and not just use the four-letter alpha code since many people aren't familiar with them. Use the common English name and if you want then you can include the four-letter alpha code. Example: Black Crowned Night Heron (BCNH).

The current American Ornithologists' Union Alpha Codes for North American birds can be found at [www.birdpop.org/DownloadDocuments/Alpha\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](http://www.birdpop.org/DownloadDocuments/Alpha_codes_eng.pdf).

They braved the frosty weather and were rewarded with sightings of **Canada Goose, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, American Kestrel, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, Dark-eyed Junco** and **Red-winged Blackbird**.

### El Paso County

On Feb. 9, an American Woodcock, unusual for Colorado, was seen and photographed at Fountain Creek Regional Park south of Colorado Springs.

### AOU Checklist Changes

*From the ABA Blog—Michael Retter (Aug. 3, 2013)*

The July issue of *The Auk* has just been published by the American Ornithologists' Union, and like every year, it contains a supplement to the AOU Checklist.

The American Birding Association Checklist automatically adopts changes in taxonomy adopted by the AOU, so these changes are in effect immediately with regard to the ABA Checklist.

The biggest news from the ABA this year is that **Sage Sparrow** has been split into **Sagebrush Sparrow** (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*) and **Bell's Sparrow** (*Artemisiospiza belli*).

The latter species includes the intermediate-looking, interior California-breeding subspecies called *canescens*. It is hinted that this population may yet be split from **Bell's Sparrow** and become a species of its own.

Most if not all vagrant records of "**Sage Sparrow**" in the central and eastern parts of North America pertain to **Sagebrush Sparrow**.

### Alpha Code Answers

Chuck Aid saw five species: **Clark's Nutcracker, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Cassin's Finch, Pine Siskin** and **Dark-eyed Junco**. Did you get them all?

Chuck has been lucky with his **ATTW** sightings during the past year: two on Berrian Mountain, one near Echo Lake and

**To contact Marilyn Rhodes,  
call 303-674-9895  
or email [cloverlane@aol.com](mailto:cloverlane@aol.com).**

**To subscribe  
to the Evergreen Birders email list  
to report and view local sightings, go to  
[evergreenaudubon.com](http://evergreenaudubon.com) and click on the  
Local Sightings link.**



*Photo of a then Sage Sparrow, now a Sagebrush Sparrow, taken by Marilyn Rhodes on the Utah-Colorado state line, May 2011, during the Colorado Field Ornithologists Convention in Grand Junction.*

another by Bergen Peak. "However, the real gold mine has been right in my own neighborhood just a little northeast of the confluence of Cub Creek and Blue Creek," he said. "Since last August, 2013, I've had 15 sightings."

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## Birding With Mike

### Next Courses

**Raptors:** 1 class: Wed, April 9 at Jefferson Unitarian Church, Golden. 2 field trips, Saturdays, April 12 & 19. \$40.

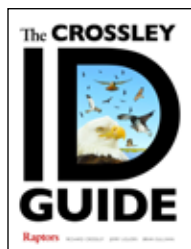
**101:** 3 classes, Wednesdays, April 23, 30 & May 7. Same location. 3 field trips: Saturdays, April 26, May 3 & 10. \$60.

Other courses start May 21 (**Songbirds**) and August 27 (**Shorebirds**).

Check website for details:  
[www.BirdingWithMike.com](http://www.BirdingWithMike.com)

Questions:  
[Mike1.foster@comcast.net](mailto:Mike1.foster@comcast.net)

## Help in learning to identify those difficult raptors



*The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors* by Richard Crossley, Jerry Liguori and Brian Sullivan. 2013. 288 pp., Princeton University Press, Princeton, ISBN 9780691157405, \$29.95 (soft cover).

After Jeff Birek's superb presentation at our February chapter meeting on the raptors we are most likely to see in Colorado, I went back to my well-used edition of Richard Crossley's "Raptors."

Crossley's guide to raptors is his third *ID Guide*, following *Eastern Birds* and the birds of *Britain and Ireland*. *Western Birds* is coming soon.

*Raptors* is, in my opinion, one of the best ways to learn to identify those difficult raptors, especially when our most common winter raptors come in more than one color form.

Red-tailed Hawks, Ferruginous Hawks and Rough-legged Hawks have both light and dark morphs.

If you've learned to identify a nice, white-breasted Ferruginous Hawk, you may get completely confused when you see a really dark brown one.

Crossley has found a unique way of helping you learn to identify birds, especially raptors.

For Ferruginous Hawks, which frequent Colorado prairies in the winter, Crossley gives us two pages of photographs, the first with adult birds and the second with juveniles.

The page of photographs shows the hawks in a typical landscape that looks just like the Front Range.

He has a mix of photos on the page, perched and flying. Some of the birds are close at hand and others far away, which is typically how I see them.

He has excellent views from below, showing the contrast between the light and dark morphs.

The second page shows a group of six juveniles, also perched and flying. You get a great view of what to look for.



*Ferruginous Hawk juveniles, above, and adults, below. From "The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors"*



But the real advantage is the next two-page spread. This page shows 10 Ferruginous Hawks flying over canyon country with no names.

The page is a quiz, challenging you to figure out which bird is adult and which is juvenile. Very challenging!

The answers are in the back, of course.

The same presentation is provided for hawks, accipiters, falcons and eagles, vultures and kites.

The photo views in the first half of the book are accompanied by details in the second half.

Three more pages describe Ferruginous Hawks in detail, including size, shape, plumage, molt, flight style and more.

The rather poetic introduction for the hawk is fun to read. Here's an excerpt:

"Over a distant hilltop is a large hawk, kiting and soaring effortlessly for its size. As the bird banks around, its overall whiteness is striking."

In addition to the species quizzes, Crossley includes really tough quizzes with multiple species. It's a challenge, but so are the raptors in the field.

I highly recommend *The Crossley ID Guide: Raptors* for anyone interested in knowing what beautiful raptor has just crossed your path.

*JoAnn Hackos shares the EA Bird Monitoring position with her husband, Bill.*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 6	EA Chapter Meeting	7 pm	Church of the Hills
March 8-9	Nest Box Sale	9am-3pm	King Soopers
March 10	Newsletter deadline	5 pm	

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

VOLUME 44, NO. 3. Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 523, Evergreen, CO 80437, publishes *The Dipper* every month. Evergreen Audubon is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Members may receive an electronic copy of *The Dipper* without charge or may pay \$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 Colorado Office, 303-415-0130, [www.auduboncolorado.org](http://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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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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Artwork: Sylvia Brockner, Mildred Keiser

New Feature: Bird Book Review  
 Bird Business: Alpha Codes  
 Nest Box Sale

**IN THIS ISSUE**

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**THE DIPPER**