



THE DIPPER

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EVERGREEN AUDUBON NEWSLETTER

www.EvergreenAudubon.org

BASH RAISES \$10,000

The numbers are in and we are very happy to report that our annual Bash met our fundraising goal of \$10,000!

Thanks again to all the volunteers, donors and participants who gave so generously in time, auction items and donations to ensure success.

Congratulations to all the winning bidders! Your support helps Evergreen Nature Center continue to improve.

Thank you!

- Ann Dodson
Director of Development

COLORADO GIVES: CHANCE TO HELP EA

A quick reminder that Colorado Gives day is Dec. 8.

This is a great way to support Evergreen Audubon and Evergreen Nature Center.

The Colorado First Foundation supports this online giving effort by adding \$1 million to be shared by the participating charities.

For more information, visit EvergreenAudubon.org.

- Ann Dodson

MEMBER RENEWAL DATE APPROACHING

It will soon be time to renew your membership for 2016.

The website has all the information and perks of being a member of Evergreen Audubon.

Help us reach 300 members in 2016.

- Ann Dodson

Golf course will be Nov. 5 topic

Golf? Birding? Golf? Wildlife watching? Golf? Hiking?

For many of us the choice is easy, but for others in Evergreen and the Denver metro area, golf, and in particular golf at Evergreen Golf Course, is an opportunity to have it all:

Mountain Bluebirds flitting above the greens, elk wandering and grazing in the rough, and the enjoyment of walking 18 holes through ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and aspen.

You, your fellow Evergreen Audubon members, and others in our Evergreen community will have the opportunity to learn how Evergreen Golf Course is working to minimize its environmental footprint and provide a sustainable golf course for the enjoyment of all along the Front Range at our next chapter meeting on Thursday, Nov. 5.

Evergreen Golf Course lies in Dedisse Park and thus is part of the Denver Mountain Parks System.

Dedisse was one of the first mountain parks, and the golf course was the first recreational feature created in the new park, in 1921. It also was the first mountain golf course in Colorado.

But much has changed in the last 94 years. Our mountain community has grown, the tools and techniques for maintaining a quality golf course have become more complex and high-tech, and people are much more aware of the potential environmental effects of golf courses on water use and quality.

Now, golf course operators need to better manage and control consequences of landscape maintenance, water application, and fertilizer and pesticide use so the

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Leucistic Red-tailed Hawk in Kittredge Park. See Bird Business, page 4. Photo by Karen Weber Whaley

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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

As you begin reading this message, Evergreen Nature Center will have completed its eighth operating season! Many thanks to Vanessa, Mark Edwards and all the volunteer visitor assistants for making 2015 another successful year.

By next month, I should be able to report on an extension to our use agreement with Evergreen Park and Recreation District to occupy the Warming Hut for another five years.

Along this line, ENC Executive Director Vanessa Hayes will pick up a check next week for \$15,386 from the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District to support ENC general operations in 2016. Thanks to the Jefferson County Scientific and Cultural Facilities District board for its continued support, which amounts to about double the amount we received in 2008.

Although the Nature Center is packed up, Evergreen Audubon does not hibernate for the winter. We will offer a Saturday morning field trip on Nov. 21 to search for waterfowl.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, Dec. 20. If you are interested in participating, please drop me a line. Details will follow in the December *Dipper*.

On Sept. 22, U.S. Fish and Wildlife announced it would not list the Greater Sage-Grouse under the Endangered Species Act. You may recall that Evergreen Audubon signed on to a letter drafted by Audubon Rockies supporting this position.

The reasoning was that collaboration among federal and state agencies, industry and private landowners could provide protections needed to recover the species.

That same day, U.S. Secretary of Interior Sally Jewel signed sage grouse management plans from the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management that were a key demand of conservationists.

Audubon Rockies and other conservation partners will continue to monitor the implementation of these plans.

As reported by Audubon Rockies, the Greater Sage-Grouse is considered an umbrella species. Its habitat needs, for large amounts of healthy sagebrush, overlap with many other species that are dependent on the sagebrush landscape.

Throughout their life cycle, sage-grouse rely on sagebrush for food and shelter, nesting under the sagebrush canopy, their young foraging among the plants, and the plant itself providing food for the bird during the fall and winter.

Saturday walk heads down the hill

Join Brad Andres, Evergreen Audubon president, for our Third-Saturday Bird Walk on Nov. 21 from 7:30 a.m. to noon. This month we will go down the hill to the South Platte River.

Bring water and a snack. Meet at the Bergen Park Park-n-Ride by 7:30; we will consolidate ourselves into as few cars as possible.

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 register online by going to www.EvergreenAudubon.org and clicking on the Event Calendar tab.

- Chuck Aid
Director of Bird Monitoring

Try the app that will help you identify bird songs

For many of us, our enjoyment of birds and the natural world is a multi-sensory experience.

We love the scent of a pine meadow, the view of a Western Tanager in the boughs of a ponderosa pine and the song of a, the song of a . . . oh, what in the heck is that bird that's singing?

Birding by ear—my biggest challenge in bird identification.

OK, so I can distinguish between the three nuthatch species common to Evergreen by sound, and identify a reasonable number of other species by sound alone, but the very best birders frequently are able to identify most or all species they encounter by call or song alone.

In fact, Don Kroodsma, author of "The Singing Life of Birds" (the last word on understanding bird songs and calls), has been quoted as saying he doesn't consider a bird identified unless he has heard the bird.

In other words, for him, the visual identification most of us rely on is insufficient!

I aspire to this a level of skill, but becoming a birder later in life poses real challenges, changing abilities in hearing and memory not the least among them.

However, there now are digital tools and mobile device apps that can help you become a better ear birder—and they are fun!

Larkwire (www.larkwire.com) describes its Master Birder mobile app as a "complete, game-based learning system for mastering bird sounds—designed for both beginners and advanced birders."



Image from Larkwire website (www.larkwire.com) illustrating a group of warblers.

Master Birder is available for iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch, and as a web app for use on a computer.

My experience has been with the iOS version on an iPad.

In actuality there are two apps, one for land birds and one for water birds, and after you download either or both apps to your device the fun begins.

The app is designed to help you train your ear through comparison and contrast of songs in similar groups. There are two basic game types: the Gallery Game and the Field Game.

In the Gallery Game, you choose a beginning, intermediate or advanced level, and whether you want all sounds

or sounds from either eastern or western North America.

Once those choices are made you review songs from four birds (with illustrations) from a given grouping.

When you feel you have sufficiently reviewed the group, you begin the game and the songs are played back to you. You can then choose to be quizzed.

The quiz consists of hearing the songs and associating each song with one of the birds on the screen correctly. You are rewarded with a green icon for each correct association.

Choose incorrectly and you are shown the correct choice but lose some icons.

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Evergreen Golf Course will be topic of Nov. 5 meeting

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courses are sustainable and friendly to human communities and wildlife, and to the landscapes and watersheds we all share.

Our chapter will host Scott Ellis, superintendent of Evergreen Golf Course, who will talk about the golf course today, its role in the community and the actions he has initiated to make the course a sustainable habitat for wildlife and golfers.

We will meet at Church of the Hills.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; please come to socialize with your fellow Evergreen Auduboners prior to a brief business meeting and announcements at 7, followed by Scott's presentation.

Scott has been the superintendent of Evergreen Golf Course since March 2013. He has been a golf course management professional for more than 20 years.

Scott has particular interests in using and developing environmentally conscious agronomics for course main-

tenance, and in the environmental, economic and social sustainability of golf.

Prior to becoming the superintendent of Evergreen Golf Course, he was assistant superintendent at South Suburban Golf Course in Centennial, Colo., for nearly 12 years and assistant superintendent at Broadlands Golf Course in Broomfield for three years.

We look forward to seeing you at the November meeting!

- Ed Furlong, Director of Education

Yard bird sightings—not the usual suspects

Band-tailed Pigeons

Band-tailed Pigeons have visited the feeders of JoAnn and Bill Hackos in Soda Creek for several years.

After a few failed attempts, I finally got to see three of them at their home Sept. 5.

Western Scrub Jays

On Sept. 1, Shirley Casey reported first-time visitors to her home in The Ridge.

“It is not a huge surprise to see Evening and Black-headed grosbeaks at our feeders, but the **Western Scrub Jay** flock was unusual.

Northern Bobwhite

On Sept. 16, Shirley Casey emailed, “Just saw this kid crossing the hill about a block from our house (The Ridge). Ponderosa at 8,000 feet. Dusky Grouse?”

Not a Dusky Grouse—it was a **Northern Bobwhite**, unusual for our area.

On Sept. 22, Shirley said her neighbor Dee Sacks mentioned that she saw what she thought was bobwhite quail as well, about half a mile from Shirley’s sighting.

Black-throated Blue Warbler

The same day, Else Van Erp reported a rare bird at her Conifer home: “I had a female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** in my aspen in front of the house. Took



Northern Bobwhite. *Photo by Shirley Casey*



Band-tailed Pigeons. *Photo by JoAnn Hackos*

me forever to figure out. The final decision was made because I saw the white patches on both sides.

“Wow, only saw one other in Colorado at Lair o’ the Bear some 20 years ago. Never realized how different they really are from the male.”

Blue Jays

On Sept. 24, Franklin McDaniel posted to EvergreenBirders, “Very fun sighting of **Blue Jays** at our feeder (near Hiwan) this morning. While we always have Steller’s, this flock of Blue Jays is the first I’ve seen since ’93 over near Murphy Gulch road (Deer Creek Canyon area).”

I’ve lived in Evergreen for 25 years and have had a Blue Jay at my feeders only once. Great sighting, Franklin!

White Hawk

On Oct. 5, Else Van Erp reported an unusual white hawk in Aspen Park. “We think it may have been a red tail since it had the right shape, size, etc.,” she said. “Hope someone else reports it.”

“It had no markings on it that we could see. No patagials or bars in the

tail. No color. Can’t think of any other bird that would be that shape.”

On Aug. 26, Christopher Kellogg and his mom, Tina Kellogg, saw a white hawk in Kittredge Park. Their friend Karen Weber Whaley photographed the bird and shared two images.

I believe this is the bird Else and Tom saw. It appears to be a **leucistic Red-tailed Hawk**.

Leucism is a condition in which there is partial loss of pigmentation in an animal resulting in white, pale or patchy coloration of the skin, hair, feathers, scales or cuticle, but not the eyes.

Unlike albinism, it is caused by a reduction in multiple types of pigment, not just melanin.

Red-tailed Hawks are the most common raptor in North America. Because the frequency of leucism in a given species is dependent on the population size, it’s not surprising that there is a relatively high occurrence of leucistic Red-tailed Hawks.

“Blue” Grouse

Tracy Spurgeon had a new yard bird Oct. 1.

“We live on High Drive near the top of Lone Peak and are a few miles south of Stanley Park Road,” she emailed. “We had a pair of female ‘**Blue Grouse**’ this morning, a first at our house. How common are they?”

In 2006, the American Ornithologists Union split the Blue Grouse into the **Dusky Grouse** and **Sooty Grouse**.

The Dusky Grouse is the third-largest grouse in North America, and one of the largest in the world.

It is a forest-dwelling grouse native

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to the Rocky Mountains. It is closely related to the Sooty Grouse, a species of forest-dwelling grouse native to North America's Pacific Coast ranges.

Dusky Grouse can be seen every month of the year in the foothills and sightings are becoming more and more common.

They spend most of their time on the ground foraging, but will also forage for buds in deciduous trees and needles in coniferous trees.

During winter, Dusky Grouse spend most of their time in coniferous trees eating needles. In general, they vocalize from the ground and rather infrequently.

I've seen them year-round at Mount Falcon. July is a good time to observe hens with their noisy chicks.

They roost in the underbrush and forage early in the morning. In winter, at dawn, you can hear the males call and watch the pairs descend from their roosts in the pines.

A pair was reported and seen by many at the Lookout Mountain Nature Center last March. I visited a few times at dusk and got to watch them fly to their roost in the trees.

Louise Mounsey reported one in her neighborhood, near Evergreen High School, in the tall grass at the intersection of Merriam and Hatch on July 25.

Barbara Klaus recalled seeing them occasionally behind her house in Peaceful Hills (off North Turkey Creek) many, many years ago, around 1985.

At least five years ago, Carol Chapman had one show up repeatedly to visit the deck area of her house on Starlight Drive off of North Turkey Creek Road.

Larry White remembered seeing them often during bird monitoring along the trail to Beaver Meadows.

On Oct. 9, Mark Meremonte and Margaret Dole reported seeing a Dusky Grouse the prior weekend at Reynolds Open Space.

They see Dusky Grouse often in the Mount Judge and Mount Hicks area, where last year they came across a mother with numerous young during the Atlas project. They've also seen them in the Elk Management area.



Western Scrub Jay. Photo by Allan Casey



Dusky Grouse pair. Photo by Tracy Spurgeon

Susan Harper also reported seeing a Dusky Grouse at Birch Hill Oct. 11.

Wild Evergreen

Mule Deer Rut

Mule deer are very common throughout the western United States and our foothills communities.

They are named for their oversized ears that resemble a mule's ears.

Compared to its cousin, the white-tailed deer, mule deer are smaller in size, and have a black-tipped white tail and white patch on the rump.

They can be 3 feet tall at the shoulder and weigh anywhere between 100 and 300 pounds. They have excellent hearing and eyesight that warns them of approaching dangers.

Males, called bucks, have forked antlers. They shed antlers in mid-February and their next set begins to grow immediately after.

Antlers are covered with velvety skin until fully formed, when the buck scrapes this layer off. Females are called does and do not have antlers.

Mule deer are social animals that typically stay in groups. They live in a multi-generation family of related females and their offspring.

Bucks older than yearlings often group together or they may remain solitary.

In late summer and fall, mixed family groups form larger groups that stay together for

protection throughout the winter.

They break into smaller groups again by the next summer.

The largest bucks with the largest antlers are dominant and breed the most often during the late-fall mating season or rut, which begins in late October and extends through November.

Bucks locate a willing doe and discourage other competitors until mating occurs.

Bucks run off prospective suitors through threatening body postures or engaging in violent jousting contests using their impressive racks as weapons.

Bucks expend large amounts of energy during the rut. Exhausted, many bucks fail to survive the winter.

The gestation period for does lasts six

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to seven months, with one or two fawns born in the early summer. Twin births often occur after the first pregnancy.

The spotted nursing fawns spend the day hidden in the underbrush while the mother is away.

The youngsters do not have an obvious odor that would give them away to predators.

Fawns begin accompanying their mother within a few weeks.

Mule deer are commonly seen browsing in open, shrubby areas

between dusk and dawn. They browse shrubs, trees and occasional grasses and forbs and retreat to tree cover to bed down during the day.

Mule deer play an important role in the wildlife food chain. They are the primary prey of mountain lions. Mule deer also can be taken by coyotes and bobcats.

Unfortunately, several also fall victim each year to a mechanized predator, the automobile.

Information gathered from the National Park Service web site.



One of three bucks in a bachelor group seen in Hiwan Hills Sept. 5. Photo by Marilyn Rhodes

Try the app that will help you identify bird songs

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After you correctly associate songs with birds in the group a sufficient number of times you are given the chance to advance to new groups.

Groups you have successfully identified to the Larkwire standard are always available for review.

When you feel ready for it, you also can use the Field Game mode and test your audio identification skills without the aid of photos, a setting more akin to field experiences.

This mode is best used after you have had a lot of practice and success with the Gallery Game and feel some confidence in your abilities—don't ask how I know this!

My experience is that when I use gallery game mode, I slowly (emphasis *slowly*) but reliably learn to distinguish similar songs, and the mode of review

and comparison reinforces my learning.

I found that consistent frequent practice for short periods is most successful in developing ability.

Putting the app down and returning to it after a prolonged (more than a few days) absence usually means I need to review earlier sounds.

It can take a while for my ability to distinguish between new sounds to recover.

A couple of caveats. First, there's a significant difference in learning songs from a machine through ear buds or headphones and listening to those same songs in the field.

The lag in between learning with an app and applying that knowledge confidently in the field is significant; practicing in the field is essential.

A program of using the app and then taking your new skills out into the field

where you are likely to find the birds whose songs you have studied would likely be the most effective means of anchoring these skills.

A second important caveat is that the song library, while well devised, is necessarily limited.

The number of songs in the Master Birder Songpacks are 393 and 253, for the land bird and water bird versions, respectively.

Also, the number of songs can be limited in the app by choosing just Western or Eastern/Central songs.

Nevertheless, there can be substantial variation in song between individuals of the same species in a region as large as the North American west.

Just go to the user-contributed bird song site Xeno Canto (www.xeno-canto.org) or the Macaulay Library of Sound (macaulaylibrary.org) if you want to find out how varied the song can be for one species in one region.

Also note that the Larkwire Master Birder apps are limited to songs, and do not include calls.

Master Birder is priced at \$2.99 per app, or a total of less than \$6 for access to more than 600 sounds.

If you like to try before you buy, there is an online demo at www.larkwire.com.

Just push the "Try it Now" button and you will be on your way to audibly better birding!

- Ed Furlong, Director of Education



WREATH SALE

Although Holiday Wreath orders closed Oct. 30, Marilyn Rhodes ordered about 35 extra wreaths.

Those who want a wreath but missed the order cutoff may contact her at cloverlane@aol.com or 303-674-9895.

She'll accommodate folks on a first-come, first-served basis.

At the start, I had no idea what a mandala was.

The story of two Tibetan monks using colored sand to create an image of a lotus flower enclosed in an ornate palace seemed to have no relationship to a book about the forest.

For the monks, the mandala is a recreation of life, the entire universe in a small circle of sand.

Thus begins “The Forest Unseen,” Professor David Haskell’s yearlong focus on a mandala that he outlines in an old-growth Tennessee forest.

His mandala, a circle a little over a meter in diameter, is the same size as the monk’s mandala.

He tests his belief that he will find the forest’s story through a long and intense contemplation of this small area.

What an intriguing idea to observe so intensely and in such a focused way. What could we learn if we did the same?

Haskell’s first visit to his mandala is Jan. 1, his last, Dec. 31. He visits the mandala 43 times during the year, with the most visits in April—I suspect for the spring migration.

Each visit lasts a few hours; each chapter describes a visit in roughly eight pages.

But each visit and each chapter provides a new revelation of the depth and complexity of life. Of course, it helps to be a professor of biology, a researcher, and a poet to both understand and express what is revealed.

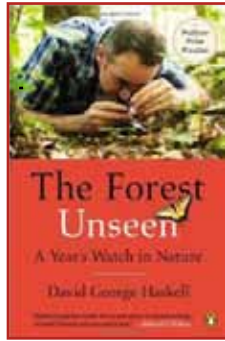
The book is accompanied by a wonderful website: www.theforestunseen.com.

Here you can see photos of the mandala and listen to readings and interviews. “The Forest Unseen” is a Pulitzer Prize Finalist.

I’ll mention just a few of the chapters that demonstrate the life of the mandala.

Jan. 1—Partnerships. This day there is a thaw and the leaf litter is wet. Haskell has selected the mandala site because a small boulder provides a sitting spot and an observation post.

On this winter day, he notices the lichens on the rocks, remarking on their vibrant colors and variable shapes and tells us how they master the cold winter by sleeping lightly in the chill and springing back to life.



The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature, David George Haskell, Penguin Books, 2012.

He teaches us about the complex inner lives of the lichens, how they combine both a fungus and an alga or bacterium to form a new creature. A lichen is a union of two life forms, a winning partnership.

As he studies the lichen, he notices other drama at work in the mandala. Ants are focused on a tiny curl, a horsehair work.

The worm is strange indeed, with an inflated body that emerges from a previous life stage inside the body of a cricket. The worms mate in knots of tens or hundreds of worms, a Gordian knot of worms.

Positive and negative relationships abound in the mandala.

April 2—Chainsaw. Hearing the whine of a chainsaw off to the east, Haskell leaves the mandala to investigate.

A crew is felling dead trees at the edge of a golf course, throwing them over a cliff.

He notes that the mandala has never been cut, making it a wonderful habitat for creatures and plants of all sorts, living in the deep leaf litter and fallen logs.

Stripping the trees away kills the inhabitants and turns the forest soil into brick. Creatures dry up and die.

But Haskell points out that humans aren’t the only source of “clear cutting” destruction. The forests are also destroyed by glaciers, fire, wind.

Haskell makes it clear that humans have “changed the forest on the scale of an ice age, but at a pace accelerated a thousandfold.”

Clearcutting by giant machines strips away all living things. In Tennessee, the result is often a monoculture of trees, the birds, wildflowers and diverse trees gone.

Haskell is not against human use of

wood products, but the unbalanced way wood is extracted.

He argues that experiences like his mandala observations can restore a moral vision about our role in the natural world.

July 13—Fireflies. Haskell walks carefully, watching out for copperheads. Their favorite food is cicadas, which are out by the hundreds.

He wonders: why is he fearful of snakes, especially in the partial darkness of dusk? He reaches the mandala and is greeted by the firefly’s green flash.

He proceeds to tell us all about the life cycle of the firefly, using light to attract a mate.

The female flashes back, but the male has to be careful. Some females mimic the flashes of other species to attract unsuspecting males, also known as meals.

Haskell explains how a firefly’s light is produced from a substance called luciferin. Stimulate the molecule, and it gives off a flash of light.

He points out that a firefly’s flash released 95 percent of its energy as light, compared with the average light bulb, which releases only about 5 percent, wasting the rest as heat.

But, as he acknowledges, we have had barely 200 years to perfect the light bulb. The firefly has had millions of years of trial and error.

As I hope you recognize, each of the visits, each of the chapters, is a wonder. You learn something new and fascinating each time.

The magic of the mayapple, the challenge of the mosquito, the seeds of the hepatica—all produce intriguing tales.

We learn about the mysteries of caterpillars and turkey vultures, chipmunks and deer, all told with precision and wonder. What fabulous stories!

“The Forest Unseen” is a great natural history of a tiny area, the mandala shedding light on our relationship with the natural world.

As one reviewer pointed out, “Each chapter will teach you something new!”

(Bill Hackos wants me to point out an error in his October article on “The Sixth Extinction.” The age of the life on earth is 500 million years rather than 500 billion. We are just not that old.)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov. 5	EA Chapter Meeting <i>Doors open at 6:30 for socializing</i>	7 pm	Church of the Hills
Nov. 10	<i>Dipper</i> deadline	5 pm	
Nov. 21	Third-Saturday Bird Walk	7:30–noon	South Platte River

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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Audubon Rockies Office, Rockies.Audubon.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	\$ 25	\$ 40
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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IN THIS ISSUE
 Third-Saturday Walk
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Evergreen Audubon

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