

# THE DIPPER

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Editor: Margaret McDole

Assistant Editor: Mark Meremonte

## Christmas Bird Count

For all you great volunteers, now might be a good time to think about keeping Dec. 16 open. It's Christmas Bird Count day! More info to follow next month.

- Tom Van Erp  
and Brad Andres

## Future Programs

### December 6

Brad Andres and Sylvia Brockner: "Christmas Bird Count-Slide Show Identification and Preparation"

## Banquet Silent Auction

I still need items for the Jan. 18 banquet. There will be fewer items this year, but of high quality. Think about donations such as books, art, concert tickets you may not be able to use, gift certificates for spas, movies, plays, etc.

Let me hear from you soon. Thanks, Irma Wolf, 303-670-3402, irmasony@aol.com.

## Wreath Orders

The deadline for ordering Holiday Wreaths is Oct. 26. To place an order, contact Marilyn Rhodes at 303-674-6580 or e-mail her at cloverlane@aol.com.

See the October *Dipper* for details.

## Birding the Interior Spine

The program for November will feature TENAS member Dick Williams. At the September 2006 TENAS meeting he presented a program, "Birding Around the Edges," of birds and habitats that can be found around the margins of the United States.

The emphasis was on pelagic, shore and wetland species found from Puerto Rico to New Brunswick and from southern California to Alaska, as well as birds of the Canadian and Mexican boarder areas.

November's program will be the supplement to the September 2006 show. It will feature slides of birds of the interior of the United States, specifically the Rocky Mountain spine from the southern portions of west Texas, New Mexico and Arizona north to Alberta.

The format of the show will be the same as the previous show. Two slide images will be projected simultaneously to illustrate similarities or differences in birds or to illustrate their associated habitats.

The show also will feature scenic views of mountains, deserts and habitats of the region in which the birds live. The program is intended to be entertaining as opposed to scholarly. It will be a pleasing visual presentation of a variety of bird life found in the intermountain West.

Dick is an amateur photographer but many of the images he will show are of publication quality. Dick has many of his bird images published in a variety of media by many



**Gunnison Sage Grouse.** *Photo by Dick Williams*

public and private organizations.

Dick has a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in landscape architecture with emphasis in environmental planning. He worked many years in private, public and volunteer organizations in the field of environmental conservation.

His projects have been in locations from Alaska to Arizona to Florida and many places in between.

His big accomplishment for 2007 was to reach the summit of four of Colorado's peaks exceeding 14,000 feet in elevation: Missouri Mountain, La Plata Peak, Mount Antero and Mount Princeton.

According to Dick, climbing mountains cuts into bird watching and photography, but it gets the heart beating, clears the mind and exhilarates the senses. On the other hand, it is a good way to get ptarmigan photos.

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# President's Message

## Wildlife

**Bird Feeders—Too Much of a Good Thing.** As a relative recent arrivee in Evergreen, I am still in awe of the natural beauty and the wildlife here. Last month I was pleased to tell you about the many birds that flocked to my new bird feeder system.

Longtime birders must have inwardly snickered, knowing what's next. Well, the problem is, too many birds found it and usually not the ones I wanted, such as grosbeaks and finches. The crows, ravens and magpies soon took over.

I discovered that the smallest feeder was the most popular with the small birds since the big birds couldn't stay on it long enough to get many seeds.

The large birds took over the feeders they could cling to and would then shake the feeder, scattering seeds onto the

ground for their friends down below. And the droppings on the deck I don't want to think about.

This feeder endeavor didn't turn out quite as planned. So I called Bill Brockner to discuss my vexing problem. His answer was to stop filling all the feeders for a while so the pests would find another source of food.

He said that food trash around supermarkets and takeout restaurants attracts these birds and they flourish. So now I will fill only the small feeders and hope the big birds will find an easier meal elsewhere.

**Turf War with Coyotes.** I used to like to watch them from a distance but that distance has gotten a little too close for my comfort zone. While pulling thistles recently, my trusty dog came whooshing back to me from the direction of a couple of coyotes that were watching us.

Yelling at them and making threatening gestures had no effect, except maybe to amuse them. The only way I could discourage them was by throwing rocks. The critters were close enough to hit with better aim.

It's hard to pull thistles while looking over your shoulder, so we retreated to the house. A couple of days later, again we were visited by coyotes and this time they did not go away, so we did. Twice after these encounters, the coyotes have come right up to the house to serenade me in the dark, daring me to walk the dog.

The DOW told me that I could not spray them with ammonia, but grizzly spray was all right. Also, shooting them was acceptable if they damaged my property, but relocating them was not. So I purchased a BB gun and have been practicing. But they must have noticed because they haven't been within range since then.

With the dark of night increasing daily for the next two months, I finally arranged to build a secure fenced area in which to walk the dog at night. But I feel a bit betrayed that the wildlife I so esteemed is keeping me indoors at times when I want to be out enjoying the stars or moon.

**Elk.** The problem is getting bigger. I usually take a walk through Dedisse Park at first light with a friend or two and several dogs. One morning recently, we heard a bull elk bugling,

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• To **Marilyn Kaussner** and **Sylvia Robertson** for putting on another Weed Awareness education outreach in Idaho Springs. They reported many people interested in fighting the noxious, invasive weeds.

• To **Marilyn Rhodes** for organizing the Holiday Wreath Fundraiser, both helping TENAS and brightening our homes this holiday season.



# Weeds on the Road

The Weed Awareness Campaign expanded its noxious weed education program to Clear Creek County on Sept. 15. They brought weed samples and information to the Safeway store in Idaho Springs.

There was nonstop conversation with the local residents about noxious weeds—especially Chinese clematis.

Ted Brown, Clear Creek County weed supervisor, played an important part in making this a successful event. He was present throughout the day and shared his knowledge of noxious weeds.

He encouraged those with questions to call him. His phone number is 303-567-4577.

- Sylvia Robertson



**Ted Brown, Clear Creek County weed supervisor, left, and the assistant manager of Idaho Springs Safeway, second from right, with interested citizens. Photo by Marilyn Kaussner**

# President's Message

*Continued from Page 2*

not unusual. Then we heard an answer, then another.

We came upon seven bulls and a herd of about 50 cows and calves. The obvious competition between the bulls, especially the huge alpha one, quickly sent us scurrying back to the cars. We drove back looking for the third person and got caught up in the herd.

As we drove out, the alpha bull thought my car was a challenger he had to get rid of, so he charged and gored the car in two places. The result was an insurance claim. I went to my agent and the debate was, did I hit the elk or did he hit me. It makes a difference.

I called the claims person who

asked what happened. I told him a bull elk charged my car. On what street? I said we don't have streets, it was an unnamed dirt road. We settled on Dedisse Park, which I think he thought was a city green.

He wanted to know if I walked away from the accident and I told him I wouldn't dare leave the car until I was four miles away. But I wasn't hurt. And no, no one else was hurt. I described the damage.

Then he asked me who owned this bull. I said, sir, this was a wild animal, wildlife, a raging bull elk in the rut. After a while he said, oh, please hold the phone, I don't have a file for charging bull elk as cause of damage, I'll have to create one.

The weird thing is that I drove right past this same bull the day before without incident. We almost get lulled into thinking of these animals as domestic as they graze through our yards most of the year. But the cows get protective of their calves in the spring (that's another story for another time) and the bulls of their harem in the fall.

We all hear and read that we should respect wildlife, we are in their territory, be careful. And I am. I am very watchful for any wildlife every time I step outside. But the coyote and elk incidents happened so fast.

I had my grizzly spray on my belt in Dedisse Park, but didn't expect to have to use it from the car and wouldn't have had time, anyway.

Those of us who choose to live in the mountains and share the territory with wild animals have a particular dilemma. One of many reasons we are here is because we enjoy hiking and working or playing outside. And we wish to maintain a healthy balance of people and animals.

To enjoy the outdoors, we must take the necessary precautions to live safely with these wonderful creatures that make our mountain community special. Next time I hear bugling, I will be in fast retreat.

- Peggy Durham

# Environmental Film Festival!

The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education is excited to present the upcoming Second Annual Colorado Environmental Film Festival, to be held Nov. 1-3 at the American Mountaineering Center in Golden.

The CEFF is an exciting, inspiring and energizing event that includes exceptional feature-length and short films for all ages, an engaging exhibition hall with representatives from local and national organizations and com-

panies, topical forums and discussions, and a children's environmental film program.

True to the spirit of Colorado, this event is supported and attended by people who value the natural world and share a passion for the power and beauty of film.

Our goal is for moviegoers to leave inspired, surprised, motivated, entertained, educated and transformed. For more information, go to [www.ceff.net/](http://www.ceff.net/).



# Bird Business

Bird watching is getting tougher in our area! Our good president was recently birding and dog walking with a friend in Dedisse Park when they came upon a large herd of elk with seven bulls protecting their harems.

They decided to move away from the herd, but her car was suddenly charged and hit by a BIG BULL. She was able to back her car away from the bull. Yes, there is damage. Everybody take heed and be guided accordingly.

Migration this autumn was about average. Evening Grosbeaks, Cassin's Finches and Pine Siskins are coming back into our area in good-sized flocks. This is welcome news.

A beautiful Green-winged Teal flew into a pond in Sue Roux's yard along Upper Bear Creek on Sept. 3. This pond attracts ducks during migration. On the same day, Sherman Wing found two Townsend's Warblers in Evergreen Cemetery.

Thanksgiving arrived early in Walt Phillips' yard. A Wild Turkey came in

on Sept. 6. Walt enjoyed watching this bird. Incidentally, mark your calendar for Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 22, our club's annual Turkey Trot! See you there.

On Sept. 9, the Gilberts found a White-throated Sparrow in Indian Hills. This eastern sparrow periodically shows up in Colorado.

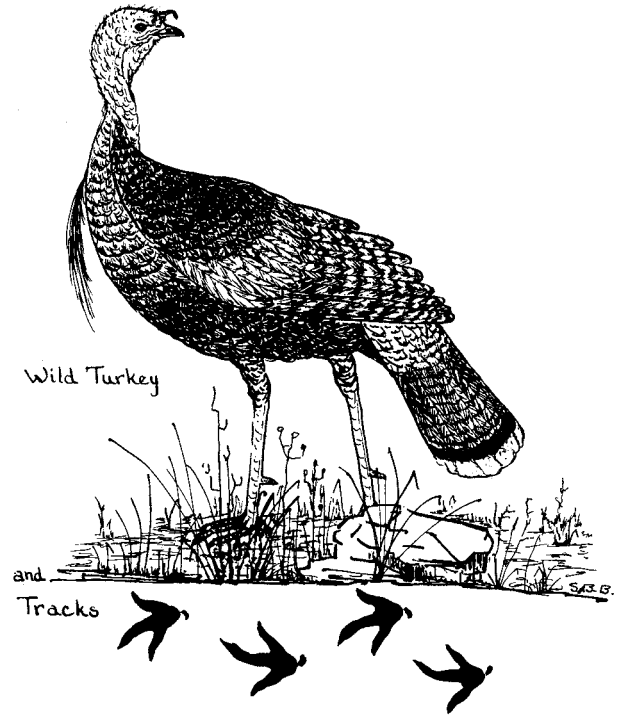
Bud Weare welcomed a Western Kingbird into his yard on Sept. 11. This bird is no doubt southbound.

An Osprey was seen flying over Evergreen Lake on Sept. 15. It was watched by Loie Evans, who saw two more on Sept. 29. They had good luck fishing!

Evening Grosbeaks are moving back into our area. On Sept. 24, Kay Niyo had 20 grosbeaks and 24 Cassin's Finches in her yard on Bear Mountain.

Exciting to see was a flock of 25 Sandhill Cranes flying over Jeff Geiger's house on Sept. 25. Nearly every fall cranes migrate over Evergreen.

Outstanding was a flock of 140 Blue-winged Teal on Evergreen Lake on Sept. 25. Loie Evans was the lucky observer.



Wild Turkey

and Tracks

## Membership

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

### New

Karen Knutson—Evergreen  
Michelle Poolet—Golden

### New Family

Carolyn & Ingrid Von Kleydorff—  
Evergreen

### Renewing

William Hawkins—Evergreen  
Pat Jurgens—Evergreen  
Patti O'Neall—Arvada  
David & Karyn Pedersen—Evergreen  
Marge Petersen—Evergreen  
Jane Stewart—Kittredge  
Helen Swem—Evergreen  
Lydia Walsh—Conifer  
**Renewing Family**  
Chris & Kim Etcheson—Evergreen  
Annemarie & Mark Sunderhuse—  
Evergreen  
Cathy & Jim Wilkins—Evergreen

Two of our out-of-state members, Dieter and Alicia Kamm, spent a month in Peru. They saw 200 species of birds in the region they visited. One trip took them over 15,000 feet above sea level. Dieter said the going was tough.

It is not too early to locate wintering birds for our annual Christmas Bird Count. For instance, check daily for Song Sparrows and other winter birds.

- Bill Brockner

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# Demeter's Torch: Introduction

*Editor's note: This is the first of a series of articles Mike Foster will write on environmental issues as he views them.*

© Mike Foster

"Brothers and sisters, we are gathered together to save the natural world . . . our natural home, which we have overexploited and polluted. We are here to begin saving that natural world. . . . Sounds like a great sermon, doesn't it? I'd like to hear it myself."

"Hold on! We're talking about The Audubon Society, right? Talk about preaching to the choir! We don't need you, brother."

"Really? Well, I'm happy to be proven wrong, and I will rejoice with every brother and sister who enlists in the cause of Demeter, but I am skeptical."

"Demeter . . . who?"

"Ah ha! Perhaps you do need me."

So, who is Demeter? Notice I did not say who was Demeter? She lives and breathes. Her spirit is everywhere, and like all goddesses she is immortal. By now such a sophisticated audience as this one will have guessed, if they did not already know, that it was the ancient Greeks who first identified Demeter as the goddess with a particular responsibility for the fruits of the earth.

You might say, to put it in modern lingo, that her niche is the ecosystem itself, for healthy crops depend upon sunlight, water, air, nutritious soil, as well as all those critters, great and small, that fertilize and aerate and otherwise process the minerals and sand and clay and decaying bodies and dead plants and active chemicals into the rich loamy stuff that nurtures life itself.

OK, what about Demeter's torch? Being associated with soil, she was also keen on what was beneath the soil, like seeds, and as you travel down under the soil you eventually arrive at the underworld, whose lord was Hades. In the fabulous logic of mythology Hades becomes the husband of Kore, Demeter's daughter, and Kore symbolizes seeds.

Someone who wanders around in the underworld is going to need a torch, to see

where she is going. Indeed, the torch is one of Demeter's symbols, along with ears of corn.

Taking my clue from Demeter, I will try to bring light into dark places. You don't need much of a torch to see that the boardrooms of multinational corporations are among the darkest spots in the universe, environmentally speaking, but we like to ignore a more cryptic black hole, which resides in the human soul.

Gentle reader, I mean no offense. What I know of the darkness of your soul I have learned by looking within my own. If there is an original sin of humanity, it is not tasting the apple of wisdom, it is ignoring the knowledge of Demeter. It will be a part of my purpose to remind you of that knowledge.

But a torch radiates heat as well as light. It will be impossible to talk about the environment without raising someone's hackles. Demeter's realm, and all that pertains to it, is already tainted by politics. It is controversial.

If it were otherwise, Americans would not still be debating the validity of global warming, the threat of explosive population growth, the need for energy and resource conservation, or sensible land-use policies.

My purpose is advocacy, and even though this column, like any other, is based on opinion, I will try to remember to rely on evidence and to consider the wider context of an issue, without pretending to create balance where the scales are obviously tipped.

We are talking about emotional issues, which is to say human issues. People are rational animals, yet they are not always

rational. They are a complex and wonderful mix of reason and wrath, genius and stupidity, insight and blindness, virtue and malice, and much else that I intend to mention, therefore to penetrate your heart and mind I will use whatever arrows I can find in my quiver.

This new column would not have been possible without the agreement of the editor of *The Dipper* and the directors and officers of TENAS. They endorsed my suggestion of a regular column on the environment because they recognized the topic as both appropriate for an Audubon newsletter and ripe for the picking, like Demeter's fruits.

Of course, this column is entirely mine, and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, or the directors and officers of TENAS.

I've been sampling a whole smorgasbord of subjects for this banquet. Some traditionally wholesome dishes, like recycling or water use, cry out for a new sauce, to give them a needed zest. Others, like global warming, have become so fattening as to be indigestible; whole new recipes are in order here.

My inspiration will come from current issues and events, as well as from things I've been reading, perhaps also from ideas cooked up by readers. Ultimately, his clientele will determine the success of any chef's menu, but it is my intention that the dishes be appetizing, even surprising at times, the ingredients fresh, and the service snappy.

I haven't forgotten the sermon with which I began. The theme of that sermon—which will serve as a watchword for this column—is simply this: You can't have your cake and eat it too.



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# Elk Meadow Nest-box Monitoring—2007

In 2006, we reinvigorated nest-box monitoring at the Elk Meadow Open Space. We made a few trips that year and located 31 boxes placed along a three-and-one-half mile loop.

Because we found many boxes occupied by bluebirds and swallows, we decided to increase our monitoring efforts in 2007.

Between March 11 and Aug. 19, we made 13 visits to monitor productivity in the 31 nest boxes. This period covered the entire breeding cycle of the six species we found nesting in the boxes: Mountain Bluebird, Western Bluebird, Tree Swallow, Violet-green Swallow, Mountain Chickadee and House Wren.

Breeding chronology of Mountain Bluebirds, Western Bluebirds and Tree Swallows, the three most abundant species, is provided in Table 1.

Although Western Bluebirds arrived two weeks later than Mountain Bluebirds, they completed nests and had laid a full clutch of eggs about a week ahead. The heavy snows and cold weather we had in late March and early April appeared to disrupt breeding of Mountain Bluebirds.

Tree Swallows arrived more than six weeks after Mountain Bluebirds and, because of their later breeding season, did not re-nest after raising successful broods.

Overall, 128 young of all species were produced in the nest boxes in 2007, for an average productivity of 4.1 young per box. All boxes, except one, were occupied by a breeding pair at some point in the breeding season.

Although Mountain Bluebirds made more nests and laid more eggs during their first nesting attempt, Western Bluebirds were far more productive (Table 2). Several first clutches of Mountain Bluebirds appeared to be abandoned during cold, snowy weather.

Half of the Mountain and Western Bluebirds that raised successful broods re-nested; productivity for both species was higher during their second nest attempts (Table 2). However, we did find

some dead chicks in second nests, which we did not find in first nesting attempts.

Because our visits were fairly widely spaced, our estimates of productivity might be on the high side.

Relative to both bluebird species, which combined laid 29 clutches, few clutches were produced by the remaining four species (12 clutches). Productivity varied a lot among species; no Violet-green Swallow young were produced from boxes, but three Mountain Chickadee pairs produced 20 young (Table 2).

We plan to continue monitoring efforts in 2008. If you would like to participate, please contact Brad Andres, 303-670-0101, heatherbrad1@yahoo.com or Kay Niyo, 303-679-6646, kay@kayniyo.com.

- Brad Andres, Kay Niyo,  
Heather Johnson



**Mountain Bluebird on Top of Nest-box.** Photo by Kay Niyo

**Table 1. Breeding chronology of bluebirds and Tree Swallows using nest boxes in Elk Meadow Open Space, Evergreen, CO – 2007.**

	Mountain Bluebird	Western Bluebird	Tree Swallow
Males arrive	11 March	25 March?	29 April
Pairs evident	18 March	1 April	12 May
Nest completed	29 Apr	22 Apr	19 May
Full clutch in nest	15 May	9 May	7 June
Hatchlings in nest	29 May	23 May	21 June
Chicks fledged	18 June	13 June	11 July
Eggs in second nest of successful pair	2 July	24 June	—
Last young of re-nest fledged	6 Aug	12 Aug	—

**Table 2. Breeding success of birds using nest boxes in Elk Meadow Open Space, Evergreen, CO – 2007.**

	Mountain Bluebird		Western Bluebird		Tree Swallow	Violet-green Swallow	Mountain Chickadee	House Wren
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Nest attempt	16		11		7	2	3	3
No. pairs	14	3	10	4	6	2	3	3
No. nests with eggs	13	3	9	4	5	2	3	2
No. successful	8	2	6	4	3	0	3	1
Clutch size	4.85	4.67	5.33	4.75	4.20	2.50	7.00	6.00
% hatch	46	50	71	79	71	0	95	50
% fledge	46	50	71	75	71	0	95	50
No. chicks fledged/pair	1.81	2.33	3.09	4.25	2.14	0.00	6.67	2.00
Young produced	29	7	34	17	15	0	20	6



## Are You Ready?

All across the country, people are learning what they can do to prepare themselves, their families, pets, friends, neighbors and even wildlife should a natural or man-made disaster occur.

In Colorado, we're at Mother Nature's mercy throughout the year. During warm weather, we have to deal with thunderstorms and their strong winds, heavy rain, dangerous lightning and hail, not to mention the possibility of tornadoes. In the colder months, we deal with blizzards, avalanches and ice.

Wildfires, rock slides and highway closures can occur during any season. Any of us at any time could be caught by surprise.

We also, unfortunately, live in turbulent times when the possibility of terrorist attacks is quite real.

Six years ago, I stood helplessly on a ridge overlooking lower Manhattan. I watched in total disbelief as the World Trade Center towers, billowing with heavy black smoke, individually crumbled and disappeared from sight. The landscape and world, as I once knew it, had been permanently altered.

I am in no way trying to be the Grim Reaper or trigger any kind of paranoia. As a matter of fact, when I look back on that day, I remember how so many people pulled together and the amazing sense of kindness that engulfed our country.

We need to remember that sense of oneness and prepare ourselves on individual, community, state and federal levels for emergencies. The more prepared we are, the safer we will all be.

Please take a few moments to go to [www.readycolorado.com](http://www.readycolorado.com) to see how you can prepare. No computer? You can call your local Office of Emergency Management or call 800-BE-READY (800-237-3239).

All you have ever wanted to know (or not) is available through this site. We can all become part of the solution and not part of the problem. Be ready. Make a plan; make a difference.

- Carol Wade-Goldstein  
Clear Creek County  
Community Emergency  
Response Training  
Team Planning Section Chief

## Audubon Astronomy

Home Needed—Would you like to host an astronomy program for Audubon members? Here's your chance!

If you are the proud owner of a somewhat dark and open night sky at your residence and have room for parking cars, I will provide a scope or two, star stories and myths, star charts and fabulous factoids while we cruise around our galaxy.

Dates and times that look promising are:

- Saturday, Dec. 8 and 15, 5:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Jan. 12 and 19, 6 p.m.
- Saturday, Feb. 16 and 23, 6:30

p.m.  
Call Pam Little ASAP so we can pick a date and announce the selected date in the December *Dipper*. Call 303-838-2807 or e-mail [plittle1@msn.com](mailto:plittle1@msn.com).

## Birding the Interior Spine

*Continued from Page 1*

Dick has presented similar shows to TENAS and the Denver Field Ornithologists that were very well received. Don't miss Dick's program Thursday, Nov. 1, at 7 p.m. at Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road (across from Evergreen Library) in the Fellowship Hall downstairs.

Refreshments and a business meeting will follow the program.

## Field Trips and Outings

**Saturday, Oct. 20**  
"Tour de Nature Centers"  
**Leader: Dave Balogh, 303-679-2799**

Join Dave for a whirlwind tour of Denver-area nature centers to find inspiration for a nature center of our own. The focus will be on the design, appeal and effectiveness of some successful nature centers within easy driving distance. Dave would sure like the opinions of kids as well as adults, so families are especially welcome on this outing. We will spend enough time at each of four centers so we can enjoy and appreciate what they offer as well as get ideas to build on. Bring lunch and a drink. Call Dave if you plan to attend. We will meet at Bergen Park 'n' Ride at 9 a.m. and return by 3 p.m.

**Thursday, Nov. 22**  
Annual Turkey Trot  
**Leader: Warren Roske, 303-526-9725**

We will meet at 6 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, at the Bergen Park 'n' Ride for our annual excursion to see the turkeys. Warren will scout the area the week before. He will have an alternate site in mind, if the turkeys leave their normal location. Please call if you plan to attend so he knows how many people are coming.

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

## Calendar

October 20	Field Trip to Nature Centers
October 26	Deadline to Order Holiday Wreaths
November 1	Chapter Meeting
November 1-3	Environmental Film Festival
November 22	Turkey Trot
December 6	Chapter Meeting

**Monthly Meetings (except January and July)**  
Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road, 7 p.m.

**Audubon Colorado Office 303-415-0130**  
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**TENAS website**  
[www.dipper.org](http://www.dipper.org)

***The Dipper deadline for the December issue is Thursday, Nov. 1. Please submit articles to: Margaret McDole, mem2@earthlink.net***

The Evergreen Naturalists Audubon Society  
Local Membership Application

Please enroll me/us in The Evergreen Naturalists Audubon Society. I/we may participate in all chapter activities, receive *The Dipper* newsletter, and vote (both Family members may vote) on chapter issues. Dues remain local.

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