MOUNSEY EXHIBIT

Please stop by Hiwan Homestead Museum to view the magnificent American Indian beadwork and other handicrafts collected by Ernest Mounsey, missionary to the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota in the early 1900s.

Ernest was the father of one of Evergreen Audubon’s founders, the late Bill Mounsey.

The exhibit runs through June. The museum is on Meadow Drive in Evergreen; hours are Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

REC BOARD ELECTION

Evergreen Park and Recreation District will hold a board of directors election on Tuesday, May 6.

Evergreen Audubon members John Ellis and Peg Linn are candidates.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Wulf and Buchanan recreation centers.

Those who need transportation to the polls may contact an EA board member for assistance.

Applications for absentee ballots, which may be downloaded at www.evergreenrecreation.com, must be submitted by May 2.

DAWN CHORUS

Our annual Dawn Chorus observance will be Sunday, May 4, at 6 a.m. at Evergreen Lake.

It is the 20th year for this wonderful event. Don’t miss out on the great birding and socializing.

So snacks may be planned, please contact Vanessa Hayes, encdirector@evergreenaudubon.org or 303-495-5180.

Jo Evans will share water insights

As we all know, water is a precious resource; it’s the building block for the entire riparian ecosystem.

The vast majority of Colorado birds depend on riparian habitats for part of their life cycle. In fact, many of our familiar birds are good indicators of the health of our rivers and streams.

For instance, the American Dipper will only flourish in clear, unpolluted streams and the Yellow Warbler’s breeding, nesting and foraging is significantly affected by the lowering of groundwater in cottonwood-willow forests.

So, who has the water rights and how do we control the quality of this valuable resource? Join Jo Evans, president of the Audubon Colorado Council and chair of the Audubon Water Task Force, at the May Evergreen Audubon Chapter Meeting to find out.

She’ll discuss basic Colorado water laws (it’s not complicated, she promises!). She’ll also update us on the Colorado Water Plan and Audubon’s Western Rivers Action Network.

The user-friendly “Water Handbook”, written by Jo, will be available for free for those attending the meeting.

Evans spent more than 20 years as an environmental contract lobbyist at the Colorado General Assembly. She represented Audubon and most of the state’s conservation community, including Colorado Trout Unlimited, National Wildlife Federation, and Land and Water Fund of the Rockies.

She has been an environmental consultant for the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and the Colorado Division of State Parks.

In 2001 Evans was awarded the Wirth Chair for Outstanding Achievement (nominated by the sitting Republican speaker of the House, the Democratic minority leader and 13 state representatives).

The next chapter meeting will be held Thursday, May 1, at 7 p.m. at Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road (across from Evergreen Library) in the downstairs Fellowship Hall.

- Kathy Madison
EA Director of Communications

A Coopers Hawk contemplates its next meal on April 11 at Red Rocks Park. Photo by Alistair Montgomery
I decided to depart a bit from my usual message that focuses on our local conservation and education topics and shift to a more global perspective.

The theme of last fall’s Bird House Bash, “Birds without Borders,” highlighted the need to address conservation of migratory birds across international boundaries. I’d like to share some information on a global crisis for migratory birds.

Many shorebird populations are in decline across the globe, and nowhere is the demise of shorebirds more evident than in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

This flyway links shorebird populations breeding in Siberia and Alaska to wintering sites in Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania. All of the Alaska-breeding Bar-tailed Godwits and Dunlins (arcticola subspecies) use this flyway, as do smaller numbers of Ruddy Turnstones and a few other species.

One of the critical shorebird stopovers in the flyway is the coastline of the Bohai and Yellow seas. It is estimated that at least 2 million shorebirds use the Yellow Sea region during northward migration, which represents approximately 40 percent of all the migratory shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Virtually all of the Alaska-breeding Bar-tailed Godwits stop here en route from Australia, where they are joined by large portions of the populations of Siberian-breeding Great Knots, Asian Dowitchers, Eastern Curlews and critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpipers.

The situation is so dire for Spoon-billed Sandpipers that a captive breeding program was initiated in 2011. Data from Australia indicates that some of these species have declined by more than 50 percent over the last 25 years.

One third of the Earth’s human population live in Southeast Asia, and 600 million people live in the area around the Yellow Sea.

Large-scale “reclamation” of intertidal mudflats for industrialization, agriculture, aquaculture and urban development has greatly altered coastal habitats used by migrating shorebirds.

By 2009, land reclamation had reduced wetlands in Korea by 70 percent, and 247,000 acres were reclaimed each year in China between 2006 and 2010. These massive alterations are readily apparent on a Google Earth® image of the region.

Because of the high population density and rapid development, the Yellow Sea is heavily polluted. Invasive Spartina grass also transforms mudflats needed by shorebirds for feeding.

The identification and implementation of specific conservation actions that will result in positive population response is often difficult for long-distance shorebird migrants.

However, the magnitude of the loss of feeding habitat in the Yellow Sea clearly presents low risks for undertaking immediate and strong conservation actions that will greatly benefit migratory shorebirds and reverse their dramatic population declines.

Efforts are underway to bring more awareness to the crisis in the Yellow Sea and implement conservation actions that will benefit migratory birds. A concerted, cooperative effort by governments and nongovernmental organizations is needed to change the tide for migratory birds.
Do you eBird? Here’s why you should consider it

Do you eBird? That’s a question I could scarcely have imagined being asked when I seriously started watching birds in the mid-’80s.

However, the explosion of digital technology and tools, particularly mobile computing, has resulted in websites and applications that not only expand the birder’s access to up-to-the-minute information on rare bird sightings and bird ID knowledge, but allows us to contribute to a better understanding of bird populations and conservation.

For me, one of the most exciting developments has been the website eBird (www.ebird.org). At eBird.org, birders of all abilities can report their sightings, from birds routinely seen at bird feeders to extensive day-long forays by foot and vehicle to see as many species as possible.

The website was developed jointly by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory for Ornithology as a dynamic repository for individual sightings that can then be accessed and interrogated by researchers, conservationists, birders and anyone who is concerned with the status and health of our bird populations.

Registering as a new user is simple, and once registered you have full ability to contribute observations and explore the data. For me, perhaps the best thing about eBird is the ability to store all my birding observations—past, present and future—at one readily accessed website.

Prior to using eBird, I was a very hit-or-miss lister, and could not tell you what I had seen. Using eBird expands my enjoyment of birdwatching, particularly in understanding the seasonal distribution of birds in my North Turkey Creek neighborhood, by allowing me to review the birds that I have seen and where and when I have seen them.

When my observations are combined with the thousands of observations by birdwatchers across the nation and the world, astoundingly detailed pictures of individual bird populations emerge across local, regional, national and international scales.

Animations of bird species migrations (ebird.org/content/ebird/occurrence) are a great example of how the combined observations of many birdwatchers can be used to understand the complexity of migration.

Check out the animation for our local favorite, the Mountain Bluebird: ebird.org/content/ebird/occurrence/mountain-bluebird/.

There are many, many more ways that these data are being used that you can find out about at eBird, but for sheer “Wow!” these animations really drive home the power of our combined observations.

The eBird website is accessible from

Continued on page 6

Bear Creek Breeding Bird Atlas returns to 2009 sites

With Red-winged Blackbirds once again singing at Evergreen Lake, we know it is time to start thinking about the 2014 Bear Creek Watershed Breeding Bird Atlas.

This is the seventh year of the Atlas, and we will revisit the sites we originally surveyed during 2009.

The purpose of the Bear Creek Watershed Breeding Bird Atlas is to provide information on bird distribution, abundance, breeding status and habitat use on public lands within the Bear Creek Watershed.

A report on the results of the first five years’ efforts can be found on the “Bird Monitoring” tab of our website (www.evergreenaudubon.org).

Atlasing is a great way to take your birding to another level. Exploring the behavior of breeding birds gives you an experience that cannot be gained by just ticking off species.

You can contact one of the leaders listed to join their team, or visit any of the listed sites on your own and enter your data. Because we try to achieve a certain level of effort at each site, it would be great if you could communicate with the site leader.

Information on the selected sites for 2014 and general survey procedures can be found at www.bcwbba.org. Please contact me at president@evergreenaudubon.org if you have any questions about this project or would like to be added to the Atlas email list. Thanks to everyone who has participated over the past six years!

- Brad Andres, EA President

Bear Creek Breeding Bird Atlas

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**Funky chickens draw birders from across the nation**

April is the month birders from all over the nation come to Colorado to see courting grouse and prairie chickens on their historical leks.

**Greater Sage Grouse** can be seen in Walden, **Sharp-tailed Grouse** in the Pawnee Grasslands, **Greater Prairie Chickens** in Wray, **Lesser Prairie Chickens** in Granada, **White-tailed Ptarmigan** at Loveland Pass or Guanella Pass, **Dusky Grouse** at Mount Falcon Park and the endangered **Gunnison Sage Grouse** in, where else, Gunnison.

So rare is the **Gunnison Sage Grouse** that it was the one bird that breeds in North America that illustrator and author David Sibley had never seen.

In April, he took advantage of being in Denver to promote the release of the second edition of “The Sibley Guide to Birds” to snag the Gunnison grouse. At sunrise, he saw 40 to 50 of the birds, close to 1 percent of the world’s population, just outside Gunnison.

**Noble Meadow Swans**

Seven or eight years ago, Phil and Diana Jackson, who live on Colorado Highway 103 adjacent to Noble Meadow, decided to try to establish a breeding flock of **Trumpeter Swans** in Colorado.

They bought five Trumpeters for $1,000 each and two Black Swans for $800 each and registered them with the U.S. Department of Interior and Colorado Fish and Game Department.

Because the Trumpeter was considered a vulnerable species, their breeding program had to be carefully monitored by both agencies each year.

Unfortunately, the Jacksons’ hopes were dashed when they determined the swans were not getting enough vegetation in their diet from the pond adjacent to the Jackson home to encourage breeding, so the swans became pets.

The swans could be seen daily, serenely swimming around the fountain in the Jackson pond.

To supplement their diet, Phil and Diana began feeding the swans cracked corn, which soon attracted Mule Deer.

Although the swans were protected and surrounded by an electric fence, the deer found it no challenge.

They repeatedly jumped the fence to dine and one day in 2013 when the Jacksons were away from home, the deer tore down the fence and the swans escaped. By this time, the swans totaled four Trumpeters and one Black.

A Good Samaritan rescued the swans and put them in the Jacksons’ barn. It was then that the Jacksons decided to abandon their plan and try to find a better home for the swans.

A woman in Fort Collins is now caring for all five.

**Red Rocks**

On March 26, Sherman Wing posted on the Evergreen Birders email list: “This week there were two reports of **Peregrine Falcons** at Red Rocks, near the amphitheater. Today I saw and heard one calling incessantly from the cliffside perch.”

I took a friend visiting from Virginia to Red Rocks April 5. The resident **Prairie Falcons** have mated again this year and the female is nurturing chicks in their nest on Park Cave Rock.

If you drive through the park, you’ll frequently see one of the pair of adults perched on Frog Rock.

I confirmed a nesting pair of **Peregrine Falcons** in the park. The nest is on Ship Rock and is best seen from the south parking lot.

Farther up the road from Red Rocks, **Golden Eagles** have nested once again in the rocks on the north side of Colorado Highway 74 near mile marker 16.

Sherman heard a **Canyon Wren** singing at Red Rocks on April 4 and 5.

**Courting Grebes**

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Continued from page 4

If you want to see Western and Clark’s grebes perform their courtship dance, you might go to Jim Baker Reservoir at 60th and Tennyson in Denver.

The grebes can usually be seen near the reservoir’s dam and telegraph their dance by facing each other and calling.

Play their song so you’re familiar with it when you view them.

Burrowing Owls Return
A colony of Burrowing Owls may be seen on Roxborough Road west of Titan Road. Last count I had in April was eight adults. Babies should be out in May.

Eastern Screech-Owls
A pair of Eastern Screen-Owls have nested in the woods near Goodson Recreation Center in Centennial for several years. They are nocturnal cavity nesters and their song sounds very much like a horse whinny.

Mount Falcon
Sherman had pairs of Western Bluebirds and Mountain Bluebirds at Mount Falcon Park March 28, plus scores of American Robins at the top of the old burn area.

Hiwan Ponds
On March 14, JoAnn and Bill Hackos spotted a pair of Common Mergansers on the Hiwan Pond. Big snowflakes were falling when Sherman stopped by on March 22. He saw a pair of Common Mergansers, two adult Great Blue Herons, Red-winged Blackbirds and a Canada Goose.

He stopped by the pond again on April 5 and saw Green-winged Teal, Mallard, American Wigeon, Common Merganser and Canada Goose.

Yard Birds
Rosy-Finches
John and Diane Sears, former owners of Evergreen Wild Bird Store, reside in Conifer and Ruth and Dan Brown reside off Little Bear Creek Road opposite Squaw Pass.

Both homes had large flocks of all three species of rosy-finches at their feeders in March and April. Ruth had more than 100 at her home April 10.

Red Crossbills
They’re back! I photographed a family of Red Crossbills at my Hiwan Hills feeders on March 23.

The youngster was probably hatched in February or possibly early March, maybe even late January. These crossbills can breed at almost any time of year, triggered by the cone crop.

Conifer seeds make up the main diet of Red Crossbills. They also eat the buds of some trees, weed seeds, berries and some insects, especially aphids.

The breeding cycle of Red Crossbills is more closely tied to food availability than it is to season. They can breed at almost any time of year, and will do so even in midwinter if there is an abundant source of seeds.

They are monogamous, and pairs form within flocks. The female typically incubates three eggs for 12 to 16 days. The male brings food to the incubating female and to the young for the first few days after they hatch.

After five days of continuous brooding, the female joins the male in bringing food to the young. The young leave the nest after 18 to 22 days. The parents continue to feed the young for about a month after they hatch.

The bills of young birds are not crossed at hatching, but cross as they grow. By 45 days they are crossed enough for the young to extract seeds from cones.

Pine Siskin Fallout
On April 3, Larry White reported more than 100 siskins on and around his feeders at 7,700 feet in the Upper Bear Creek area.

Mark Meremonte and Margaret McDole, also in the Upper Bear area, reported the usual 10 to 15 siskins along with numerous other avian visitors.

Next, Fran Enright reported about 50 siskins at her feeders at 8,500 feet.

Melissa and Todd Leasia live near Alderfer/Three Sisters Park and have seen many Pine Siskins recently.

On March 29 she commented that they’d had dozens and on a few days what looked like hundreds of siskins.

Alderfer/Three Sisters Area
Melissa and Todd saw their first bluebirds of the season—a pair of Westerns—in Blue Bird Meadow on March 15. By March 27, Alderfer was “crawling with” both Western and Mountain bluebirds.

Aspen Park
On April 1, Dan Frelka had his first Mountain Bluebird of the season in Aspen Park, near the post office.

Indian Hills
Sherman Wing had three Eurasian Collared Doves feeding on the ground beneath his front feeder in Indian Hills on March 21.

That evening, David Walker heard the cooing of a Mourning Dove at his Indian Hills home.

To contact Marilyn Rhodes, call 303-674-9895 or email cloverlane@aol.com.

To subscribe to the Evergreen Birders email list to report and view local sightings, go to evergreenaudubon.com and click on the Local Sightings link.
Do you eBird?

Continued from page 3

any home computer or mobile device. Mobile device apps also have been developed to give smartphone and tablet-equipped birdwatchers access to eBird data on the go.

Two that I have used are BirdLog NA (for North America) and BirdsEye HD.

BirdLog NA was developed as a tool to improve adding data to eBird, exploiting the GPS functions of smartphones and tablets. I can say that it has made my entry of data into eBird even easier and more direct, including adding observations while still in the field.

I use BirdsEye HD to find out what birds have been seen in places across the country and world that I travel to for work or for pleasure, providing up-to-the-minute information from the observations submitted by my fellow eBirders for that area.

The abilities of both these apps require more space than I have here, but you can learn more about them at www.birdseyebirding.com/.

No observation is unimportant; the knowledge that we as birdwatchers have and can add to eBird is expanding our knowledge of birds in ways not possible without the citizen science effort that is eBird’s foundation.

You too can make a difference. I suggest you go to one of eBird’s newer features, Hotspot Explorer (ebird.org/ebird/hotspots). Type in “Evergreen Lake” and see what is known for our neck of the woods. Is there something you would like to add?

- Ed Furlong, EA Education Director
Did you know that Magpies can recognize themselves in mirrors?
That penguins are afraid of water?
That Clark’s Nutcrackers remember where they stashed their seeds, even under the snow?
Or, that Black-browed Albatrosses mate for life even though they spend most of their lives flying around the Southern Ocean?

If these are intriguing observations, I urge you to read Noah Strycker’s new book, *The Thing with Feathers: The Surprising Lives of Birds and What They Reveal About Being Human*. //Riverhead Books, 2014//

Strycker is an ornithologist and associate editor of Birding, the magazine of the American Birding Association.

He spent nearly 1,000 hours studying Purple-crowned Fairy Wrens in the outback of northwestern Australia, where it is often 110 degrees in the shade.

He reports on their intriguing altruistic behavior. Adult offspring, as well as unrelated adults, participate in raising the newest chicks.

Scientists have speculated on the meaning of this kind of cooperation. They ask what benefit accrues to birds participating in raising offspring other than their own, especially when the chicks are unrelated. We wonder why other animals, especially humans, are altruistic.

Strycker reviews the scientific studies of altruism, including a discussion of game theory, the study of strategic decision-making.

Mathematicians have found that being nice does count, generally ending up to the advantage of the person cooperating even if 90 percent of the time the good actions are never returned.

In each chapter, Strycker recounts interesting phenomena about birds, along with a discussion of the scientific research behind them.

Explaining how homing pigeons find their way, he notes that a study of migratory robins revealed that they navigated just fine without their left eyes, but got lost when their right eyes were covered.

Starlings, we learn, have an amazing ability to move together in floating, swirling flocks. Many have seen the amazing flights either in person or on YouTube.

Using his expertise in theoretical physics, the Italian scientist Cavagna discovered that each starling orients itself to just seven other individuals, a number exactly sufficient to keep the flock moving synchronously.

I was intrigued by the chapter on Hummingbird Wars, especially since we experience them nightly throughout the summer in Evergreen. If you have multiple hummingbird feeders, you know what it means to watch 30 to 40 of them battling over the sugar water.

Strycker describes the plight of a guest lodge owner in Costa Rica, who had her feeders taken over by one super-aggressive Rufous-tailed Hummingbird.

She tried moving her feeders, putting up more feeders and taking down all but one, but nothing helped. He succeeded in driving away all the other hummingbirds not only from her feeders, but from the surrounding gardens.

With their high-speed flight and helicopter hovering, hummingbirds have to eat almost constantly, ingesting more than their weight in nectar every day. It requires that they descend into a torpor at night, reducing their energy use nearly to zero.

Protecting a group of flowers or your feeders from rivals helps an individual hummer ensure that he or she will live another day.

In each of the fascinating stories, Strycker provides details about scientific studies to support the basic observations. He also speculates about the implications for the behaviors of birds and the related behaviors of humans.

He wonders why, for example, both people and parrots and a few other creatures appear to enjoy music and are able to dance to a beat. Some scientists argue that music has no intrinsic value; it’s just a “quirky byproduct of evolution.” Music has no effect on survival. Or, perhaps that doesn’t matter. We enjoy it nonetheless.

I found *The Thing with Feathers* to be fascinating. Although I had heard about many of the behaviors Strycker relates, I didn’t know about the scientific background. You’ll learn a lot as well and have a great time doing it.
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 __________________________

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Name ____________________________________________________________

Family member(s) name(s) ________________________________

Address ________________________________________________________

City ____________________________ State ____ Zip __________

Phone (optional) _______________________

Email ________________________________________________________

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.

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.