



# THE DIPPER

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MAY 2017

EVERGREEN AUDUBON NEWSLETTER

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



## 23rd ANNUAL DAWN CHORUS SATURDAY, MAY 13th

Join us in celebrating International Dawn Chorus Day with us by doing some early morning birding on the 13th at Evergreen Lake. We gather at the Nature Center for coffee at 6 am and then head out for a day of birding and socializing with snacks to follow. Be sure to join us for this fun day. For more information see page 7 or contact Brad at [vicepresident@evergreenaudubon.org](mailto:vicepresident@evergreenaudubon.org).



### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are lots of opportunities to get involved with Evergreen Audubon this spring, from bluebird nest box monitoring (pg. 3) or being a Visitor Assistant at the Nature Center (pg. 7). There will be many events this summer you can help with as well such as Dam Duck Derby, Member Picnic, and our annual Bash. Contact Colleen if you are interested in volunteering at [encdirector@evergreenaudubon.org](mailto:encdirector@evergreenaudubon.org).

## CHAPTER MEETING: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

ED FURLONG

Across the United States, the Front Range, and here in our Evergreen World, birds are on the move. Spring has arrived, and Western and Mountain Bluebirds are returning to nest, Sandhill Cranes are a croaking chorus as they fly overhead northward, warblers flit in and out of the quickening willows along our streams. Migration, a pageant of color and movement and avian life, is underway. But more than annual spectacle, migration is a living stream of avifauna bridging hemispheres, connecting our homes, streams, meadows and forests with similar habitats thousands of miles south of us in Mexico and Central and South America.

We celebrate this interconnectedness with International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD; [www.birdday.org](http://www.birdday.org)), officially the second Saturday in May each year in Canada and the U.S. and falling on Saturday, May 13, 2017 (and in happy coincidence the day we celebrate Dawn Chorus!). A major aspect of IMBD is recognition of the need to develop

partnerships and preserve habitat so that the Bullock's Oriole you see in the spring along the lower reaches of Bear Creek can flourish on its wintering grounds in Central America and Mexico. Multiply this one example by hundreds of migrating species and the magnitude of the need becomes obvious.

Evergreen Audubon is truly fortunate that at our Chapter meeting on Thursday, May 4, 2017 we will host Susan Bonfield, Executive Director of Environment for the Americas (EFTA; [www.environmentamericas.org](http://www.environmentamericas.org)), the home of International Migratory Bird Day. Susan will present "International Migratory Bird Day: Stopover Sites—Helping Birds Along the Way." Susan will provide an overview of the genesis and growth of IMBD and its cross-hemispheric programs. In particular she will discuss stopover sites, those habitats between wintering and nesting sites where birds rest and refuel. The preservation and enhancement of these stopover sites are crucial to the survival of migratory birds.

Come at 6:30 pm to the Evergreen Audubon Education Center (29997 Buffalo Park Road) to visit with your fellow members and Evergreen neighbors, and stay for this great program following a brief business meeting.



MacGillivray's Warbler © Bill Schmoker



# Evergreen Audubon

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<b>Webmaster</b>		<a href="mailto:webmaster@evergreenaudubon.org">webmaster@evergreenaudubon.org</a>

Chapter Meetings first Thursday, 6:30 p.m. except January, at the Audubon Education Center, 29997 Buffalo Park Road.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE KATHY MADISON

The 2017 season of the Evergreen Nature Center is officially open! Thanks to all the volunteers who came out on nesting day to help set up our wonderful treasure. We'll be open on the weekends until Memorial Day then switch to summer hours which include some weekdays as well. We still need several visitor assistants, so don't be shy, come on join the fun. We'll make sure you will be volunteering with either Colleen, the center director, or Susan, our seasonal naturalist or an experienced visitor assistant. Check the calendar for upcoming visitor assistance training sessions.

I hope you can join us for our 23rd annual Dawn Chorus on Saturday, May 13th. We meet at the Nature Center at 6am for coffee then head out around the lake to listen and see our feathered friends. Last year was my first year of attending and am I glad I did! Everyone made me feel welcomed and there was an amazing amount of energy considering it was so early in the morning. Dawn Chorus is a wonderful time to be at the lake; very few people are there except your fellow birders and it's very quiet giving you a chance to hear the chorus of birds. It's an amazing sound. Evergreen Audubon's best birders are there to help you identify the bird calls and songs. If you are working on the 2017 birding challenge, you don't want to miss this event.

Last year, we saw or heard many of the usual lake birds (Double-crested Cormorants, Barn Swallows, Song Sparrows and Red-winged Blackbirds) but we also had a few special visitors, including a Lark Bunting that rarely comes up the hill and a Clay-colored Sparrow. For me, being a newer birder, I was also introduced to the Plumbeous Vireo, Say's Phoebe and Yellow-rumped Warbler. In the past 22 years, I'm sure there have been a few snowy Dawn Choruses, but last year was perfect weather, making getting up so early a bit easier. Let's hope we're lucky again this year.

Thank you to all the members who supported Evergreen Audubon and the Evergreen Nature Center in this year's annual appeal. We couldn't be successful without your support.

-Kathy



Why do I love nest box monitoring? Well, for starters, every box holds a surprise. There are 35 boxes in Elk Meadow and 22 in Alderfer/Three Sisters Park that are put up by and monitored by Evergreen Audubon. That makes 57 surprises. Every two weeks during nesting season, Brad Andres and I check each of the boxes.

Evergreen Audubon members are invited to come along and help out and enjoy the fun.

So, back to what makes each trip so special for me. First of all I get to use an electric screwdriver. This is fun because I'm not allowed to use power tools at home so I feel like I am doing

something forbidden. If you come along with me you can hear that story. Yes, we chat endlessly as we walk from one box to another. We talk about all those things that outdoors Colorado folks talk about: our latest hikes, travels, birds, fire mitigation, home maintenance, you name it.

I like to identify the butterflies on sunny days and always carry my camera to take their pictures. Brad just cares about birds as far as I can tell. He will identify a Plumbeous Vireo and Dusky Flycatcher by ear. When I first started doing this eight years ago, it was such a treat to go nest boxing with him because there was so much to learn. Some of our helpers like to identify the wild

flowers. One likes beetles. We all dislike the noxious weeds. Everyone likes to open boxes and find the latest developments. Bluebirds, swallows, nuthatches, chickadees, wrens. White eggs, blue eggs, brown, speckled eggs. Tiny naked birds, little fuzzy birds, barely feathered babies, hungry teenage nestlings. Nests of grass, pine needles, feathers, sticks, moss, hair, unidentified pieces of plastic all carefully and artfully made.

You can come along! We'll be checking the nest boxes at Alderfer/Three Sisters Park on Saturday, May 8th at 8 am. You can receive email announcements of future dates and times by sending your email address to Brad Andres at [vicepresident@evergreenaudubon.org](mailto:vicepresident@evergreenaudubon.org) or me, Rachel Hutchison, at [treasurer@evergreenaudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@evergreenaudubon.org).





Jeffrey Lockwood writes crime stories, and *Locust* is one of them. The crime occurred in the 1870s when hordes of hungry locusts descended on the plains of North America and ate everything in their path, all the crops, the boards on the homes, the handles of farm implements, and even people's clothing. The Rocky Mountain Locusts (*Melanoplus spretus*), of course, had been invading the plains for millennia but not until European settlers farmed the plains with single crops did they evoke such dread.

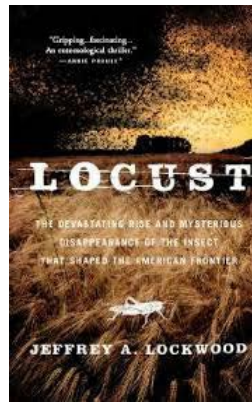
A 1902 sketch from the University of Minnesota labels grasshoppers as among "insects notably injurious" at the time.

In the first third of *Locust*, Lockwood sets the scene by describing the locust hordes and the devastation they caused and providing an historical context. People compared them to tornadoes; they wasted the landscape in much the same way. Dr. Albert Child, an early meteorologist, calculated the size of the swarm moving through Nebraska in 1874.

"They were visible from six to seven hours of each of the successive five days ... the army in the line of advance would be 120 hours by 15 miles per hour = 1,800 miles in length, and say at even 110 miles in width, an area of 198,000 square miles! And then from one-quarter to one-half mile deep."

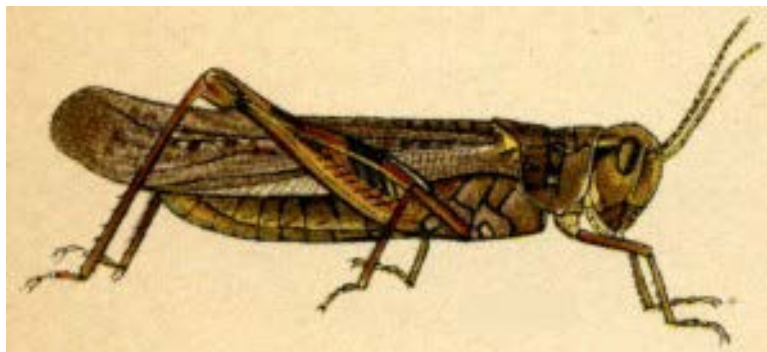
That swarm was the size of the combined areas of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Lockwood recounts the response of the people and the politicians to the



**Locust: The Devastating Rise and Mysterious Disappearance of the Insect that Shaped the American Frontier,** Jeffrey Lockwood, Basic Books, 2009.

devastation. The first reaction was to blame the people for their plight. The locusts were, as the Bible affirmed, a punishment from God. The farmers must have done something wrong. Because of this mindset, the government was loath to help, even to provide food for farm families who were starving because they had lost all their crops and all their income. The politicians



argued that helping the stricken would encourage dependence on government aid. John Pillsbury, governor of Minnesota, argued that handouts to the poor would "undermine their moral fiber." Finally, one lone army general insisted that the army intervene with food from its stores.

You might have read the description of the swarm's behavior in Laura Ingalls Wilder's, *Little House on the Prairie*. The family's wheat crop was nearly ready to harvest when a cloud appeared in midday. The falling insects sounded like a hailstorm. Once they descended on the wheat, the sounds of their chewing

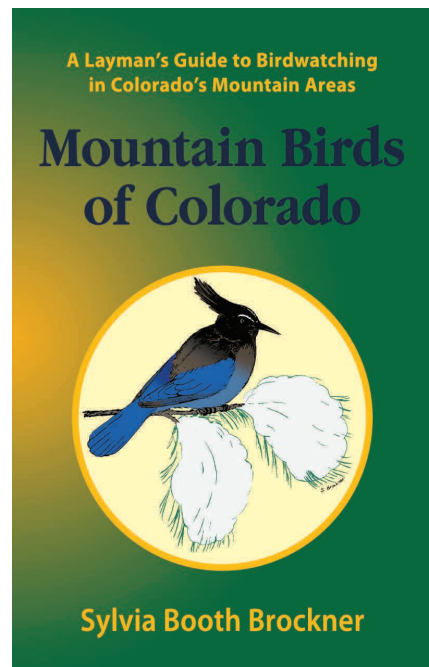
were like thousands of scissors, devouring every living plant. Wilder concludes, "not a green thing was in sight anywhere."

The second third of Lockwood's account is devoted to the scientists who were moved to study the locusts and understand how they might be managed. As a result of the work of Charles Valentine Riley, Norman Criddle, and Boris Petrovich Uvarov, scientists began to understand the locusts' life cycle. They were puzzled, however, by the fact that by 1900 the insects had vanished and were declared extinct by the 1940s. Other locust species still exist throughout the world. Only the Rocky Mountain Locust had disappeared. The last living specimen was recorded in 1902. What happened?

The last third of *Locust* unravels the mystery. But—you're just going to have to read the book yourself to find out what happened. It was Lockwood and his graduate students who investigated the mystery and found the answer. Lockwood was then a professor of entomology at the University of Wyoming. You'll be amazed at what they discovered.

When we first chose *Locust* as one of the books for the newly formed Evergreen Nature Book Club, I was not too enthusiastic. But once my copy arrived, I could not put it down. Lockwood is a superb writer. He weaves what might have been a difficult subject into a fascinating story. He is presently in the philosophy department at the University of Wyoming where he teaches creative writing. He has written nine books about insects and was awarded both the Pushcart Prize and the prestigious John Burroughs Medal in the field of natural history.

Sylvia Brockner announces the publication of *Mountain Birds of Colorado: A Layman's Guide to Birdwatching in Colorado's Mountain Areas*, compiled from her weekly newspaper column that appears in the Canyon Courier for 45 years. The book is designed to be used in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains west of Denver. It contains more than fifty of the common bird species likely to be observed in this area. We hope to have the book available on May 13, International Migratory Bird Day and our Evergreen Audubon Dawn Chorus celebration. We also hope that Sylvia will be able to attend. Please join us to honor Sylvia and get your copy of the new book.



*Red-winged Blackbird — One of the many beautiful illustrations in Sylvia Brockner's book.*

## 23RD ANNUAL DAWN CHORUS MAY 13TH

Our 23rd annual Dawn Chorus observance will be Saturday, May 13, at 6 a.m. at the at Evergreen Lake. This fun and thrilling gathering of friends and members to rise with the birds and rejoice in their song is a great tradition to take part in! Don't miss out on the great birding and socializing.

We coordinate our Dawn Chorus observance with International Dawn Chorus Day, which kicks off May 1, 2017 as a means of celebrating this miracle that begins each day and to raise global awareness of the voices of birds at a time when their calls and songs are most abundant and important, that is, breeding season. This year's celebration also coincides with International Migratory Bird Day.

Join your fellow Audubon members and bask in the myriad avian voices raised around Evergreen Lake. We meet at the Evergreen Nature Center first for coffee provided by Evergreen Audubon. Please bring a breakfast treat to share with your fellow birders after our morning adventure. Finger food that doesn't need to be kept cold or heated up works best. If you have questions about the event, please contact Brad Andres at [vicepresident@evergreenaudubon.org](mailto:vicepresident@evergreenaudubon.org).



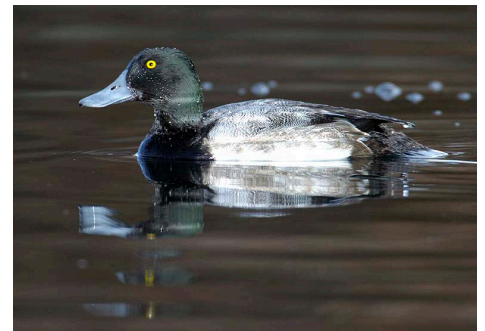
*Birders at the 2016 Dawn Chorus © Todd Leasia*



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM APRIL 5 BIRD WALK TO RED ROCKS – NOT! CHUCK AID

Despite the intention of our bird walk being held at Red Rocks and that we would catch up on the latest falcon news there, we were confronted on that Wednesday morning by extremely icy conditions, such that one could stand still and move (or be moved) across the Red Rocks Trading Post parking lot in an effortless glide – more than a bit disconcerting for all thirteen participants.

So, we put the falcons on hold and headed over to nearby Harriman and Hine Lakes where we were able to tally a respectable 44 species. First of all we had a great variety of waterfowl with twelve species of ducks and three species of grebes. Three outstanding birds were the male Ruddy Ducks, the Horned Grebes, and the single Western Grebe. We were also fortunate to see a few Greater Scaup. Note how the head is rounded, and the eye is relatively high on the head.



While at Harriman twelve Turkey Vultures soared in to land as a group in the tops of a couple of nearby trees. We also saw two different pairs of Say's Phoebes, all four were of interest because of the generally pale yellow color of their bellies with very little discernible orange or rust. Also, we had a Great-tailed Grackle, and then we had great looks at some Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, and Western Bluebirds.

With so many wonderful birds all morning it's difficult to say which one was the best, but it was very special to see a male Yellow-headed Blackbird.



One last note — a contingent of our group did stop by Red Rocks on their way home and managed to record three species of falcons: American Kestrel, Prairie Falcon, and Peregrine Falcon. Not bad!

Visit the website for a list of all species seen on this field trip.

*All photographs courtesy of Bill Schmoker. From the top: Ruddy Duck, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Greater Scaup, Barn Swallow, Tree Swallow, Yellow-headed Blackbird.*



# SPRING MIGRATION IS HERE

BRAD ANDRES

Despite the snow storm the last weekend in April, spring migration is definitely underway in the Foothills. Although some of our summer breeding species have already arrived, such as bluebirds, hummingbirds, and sapsuckers, May signals the major spring migration period for songbirds and shorebirds that breed farther to the north. It is a good time to keep an eye out for warblers, flycatchers, and the occasional sandpiper. Although we don't have the epic fall-outs of migrants that can be experienced along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastlines, the diligent Foothills observer can find some interesting migrants. A quick look at the CoBirds list (<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/cobirds>) indicates our first influx of interesting warblers and shorebirds.

For the Mountain Community, the best spring birding is often down the hill. Last year, the shrubs around the Big Soda Lake boat ramp in Bear Creek Lake Park yielded some interesting spring migrants, including Tennessee, Nashville, and Blackpoll Warblers, Sage Thrasher, and Solitary Sandpiper. Rainy mornings seem to be best for birding

this area. Perhaps an over-looked area for migrants is the trail along south Dinosaur Ridge (accessed on Route 93 and the closed West Alameda). An early morning walk next week could produce thrushes, flycatchers, and warblers. An added bonus is the summer resident Black-chinned Hummingbirds, White-throated Swifts, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Rock Wrens.

Evergreen Audubon will be welcoming our migrants at Dawn Chorus at Evergreen Lake on May 13th, which

this year is on International Migratory Bird Day (Sue Bonfield will provide a great overview of IMBD at the May 4th meeting). Starting at 6:00 am, we will scour the Lake's environs to see as many species as we can. Last year we had some interesting species, including Lark Bunting, Brewer's Sparrow, and Clay-colored Sparrow. Hope to see you there to welcome back our migrants!



# VOLUNTEER WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

COLLEEN KULESZA

If you are a returning Visitor Assistant or a new Nature Center volunteer, we've got a variety of trainings and workshops planned for this spring. These three are designed to help a Visitor Assistant know how to open and close the ENC, process sales, talk to visitors, and learn more about the exhibits we have.

Other workshops will be planned for the summer that will focus on specific species or subjects. Let Colleen know if you have a specific subject you'd like to learn more about as a Evergreen Audubon Volunteer.

Please register on our website so we know how many folks are attending. [www.evergreenaudubon.org/programs-and-events/cal](http://www.evergreenaudubon.org/programs-and-events/cal)



**Operations Training:** Learn the ins and outs of being a Visitor Assistant.

Tuesday, May 2nd, 6 to 8 pm  
OR Friday, May 5th, 1 to 3 pm

**Natural History of our Area:** Learn all the science behind our exhibits and answers to common questions we get.

Monday, May 8th – 1 to 3 pm  
OR Tuesday, May 9th – 6 to 8 pm

**Engaging with our Visitors:** Learn best practices for approaching and engaging our visitors.

Tuesday, May 16th – 6 to 8 pm  
OR Monday, May 22nd – 1 to 3 pm

# UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

## MAY

Wednesday, 3rd	Guided Bird Walk	7:00 - 11:00 am	Red Rocks (meet at Library)
Thursday, 4th	Chapter Meeting	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Education Center
Saturday, 8th	Blue Bird Nest Monitoring	8:00 am	Alderfer/Three Sisters <i>(upper parking lot)</i>
Wednesday, 17th	Wednesday Wild Ones	11 am - 12 pm	Evergreen Nature Center
Saturday, 13th	Dawn Chorus!	6:00 - 11:00 am	Evergreen Nature Center
Saturday, 20th	Guided Bird Walk	7:00 - 11:00 am	TBD
Wednesdays	After School Program	3:30 - 5:30 pm	Education Center

## June

Thursday, 1st	Chapter Meeting	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Education Center
Wednesday, 7th	Guided Bird Walk	7:00 - 11:00 am	TBD
Friday, 9th	Story Time with the Library	11 am - 12 pm	Evergreen Nature Center
Wednesday, 14th	Wednesday Wild Ones	11 am - 12 pm	Evergreen Nature Center
Saturday, 17th	Guided Bird Walk	7:00 - 11:00 am	TBD
19th - 23rd	Summer Day Camp <i>(6-7 year olds)</i>	10 am - 2 pm	Education Center

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!

### Evergreen Audubon Local Membership Application

I/we would like to join the Evergreen Audubon. I/we may participate in all chapter activities, receive the newsletter electronically, and vote (two Family members may vote) on chapter issues. Dues remain locally.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Family member name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

(include to receive electronic newsletter and updates)

	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Family</b>
Annual dues	\$ 25	\$ 40
Additional donation	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>Total enclosed</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

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, call 1-800-274-4201 and use chapter code C9ZD090Z.