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Bird Business – Spring Migration – Evergreen Audubon

12-15 minutes

Yard Birds

On Thursday morning, March 26th, Chris Pfaff reported, “with 12” of snow on the ground and lots of birds (mainly juncos and house finches) hovering around the feeders, a sharp-shinned hawk swooped in and the birds scattered. Two magpies scared the hawk off and he/she left empty-taloned. There have been several years we have witnessed a sharp-shinned hawk at our feeders just once and always around this time.”

The next day, JoAnn Hackos had a Red Crossbill at her feeder in Soda Creek. “They are pretty rare here. Didn’t stay long.”

Cassin’s Finches return



JCrivello.com

Evening Grosbeak, Cassin's Finches, & Pine Siskins

On March 26th, JoAnn Hackos posted on evergreenbirders, "We had two (male and female) First of the Year (FOY) Cassin's Finches at our feeders last night and this morning. Spring in the latest snowstorm." – JoAnn and Bill

Barbara Jean Gard reported that she has Cassin's Finches at her home, too.

Fran Enright responded, "Cassin's Finches show up in good numbers when the weather is bad at my house (8,500' off of #103). Wednesday brought a flock of 50 Rosy Finches. Nasty weather but great birds."

Barbara Klaus commented, "I have also had lots of Cassin's in the recent weeks when the storms were upon us. And finally, my female Downy has been dropping by occasionally. Happy Easter to all. Now for Spring to return."

On April 1, Jackie Crivello posted this image taken in Marshdale at 8,100 feet to the Evergreen Nature Facebook site, "Shot through a wet snowy window, but birds are eating good today." Pictured with the two males Cassin's Finches are a male Evening Grosbeak and two Pine Siskins.

Third Saturday Bird Walk – Wheat Ridge Greenbelt

Chuck Aid reported on March 19, "Nine of us basked in the sun, clouds, and occasional snow flurries this morning while racking up 41 species at the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt (see list below).

"With that many species the highlights were numerous: a nice

little flock of Cackling Geese at West Lake, a male Wood Duck that flew over us before coming back and landing right next to us, wonderful views of Cinnamon Teal, ditto for Green-winged Teal, wild courtship behavior from the wacko Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers seemingly everywhere, Double-crested Cormorants en masse at their usual rookery at Tabor Lake, a lone Killdeer, at least three Say's Phoebes, and a wonderfully tuneful Song Sparrow.

“A few species that I had hoped for, but that we didn't find, were Blue-winged Teal, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Wilson's Snipe, and Tree Swallow. We wrestled with a lone female Scaup that we initially identified as a Great Scaup, but then chickened-out and let it be a Lesser Scaup.”

Bear Creek Canyon

On April 15th, Kathanne Lynch saw both adult Golden Eagles at the Idledale nest site. “No food was brought to the nest, and I saw no other indication of young yet. Might be 10 more days for young. While observing the GOEA, I saw two swifts (assume White-throated Swift) flying over the ridge directly above the nest.”

Red Rocks nesting Peregrine Falcons disturbed by workers...again





Contractor at Red Rocks Peregrine Falcon Nest Site

On April 5th, Bob Santangelo alerted me and Joe Roller, President, Denver Field Ornithologists, and Director, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, to a recurring problem.

“I was at Red Rocks today around 10am. I found a lone Peregrine female on Creation Rock sitting on the ledge they used last year. Yenter was there for rock mitigation again and although they were working on the theatre-side, (they had rope hanging down to the steps and I photographed a worker in a big crevice) they were accessing from the north side somewhere and spooked the bird off the ledge. It did not return and I waited for over an hour.

“I found a m/f pair at the Ship Rock face and observed copulation and courtship behavior some time later. I was at the park until 1pm. I spent some time looking for Prairies on Park Cave but had no luck.

“What was supposed to be the arrangement with rock mitigation in relation to falcon activity? They really shouldn't be doing anything while the birds are establishing territory and courtship should they?”

Joe responded by notifying Dennis Brown, the Park Ranger Supervisor, “Just like last year. birders have observed Peregrine Falcons flushed off their nest, which meets the definition of harassment.

“This is of great and urgent concern. The same thing happened last year. I don’t want the contractors to feel the weight of the Federal laws that prohibit this, no matter how well-intentioned the work is. They must stop and resume before or after the nesting season.

“I have confidence that you share my concerns and will take action, Dennis.”

Brown’s response, “Thanks for bringing this to our attention. We have discussed the issue of avoiding nesting periods with scheduled rock work with our colleagues at Arts & Venues. Obviously, if there is emergency work that needs to be done it will have to go through, but we will continue to try to work with them on scheduling work to avoid important nesting periods. We would generally like to follow the CPW model for avoiding scheduled work from March 15th –July 31st in the area of the nest.

“Please continue to bring such wildlife disturbance issues to my attention and I will continue to try to push for changes to take place.”

Roller followed up, “Thanks for your helpful, prompt and positive response.

“Getting back to the observation birders made in the past few days, work was going on near the nest, the birds were flushed, etc, which is what we are trying to prevent.

“So either that work was “emergency” work or some of your agreements with the company were not being kept, perhaps because they did not filter down to the employee level.

“Because of this very recent, significant problem, can you or the

birders or someone contact the company, urging them to find a way to avoid disturbance? I presume that at the company level they want to honor their reasonable agreement with you and prevent disturbance. At the very least, I would like to have them acknowledge that they will cease and desist and document that the work was done on a true emergency basis.”

Bob shared additional observations and information...

” The birds have shown up as early as the first week of March to begin courtship and nest site selection. I don’t know when they arrived this year, this was my first trip to the park.

“The bird I observed on Creation may, or may not be, the same bird I saw at Ship Rock a couple hours later. We have no way of determining if these are the same birds as in previous years or new individuals.

“Nest site selection is specific for Peregrines. Why they pick a certain site in the rocks is not known. But what has been proven is that nest sites that were not used when Peregrines were endangered, were reclaimed by future generations of captive-bred birds that were released (in some cases the very same potholes in the rocks). These are birds that had no previous knowledge of these specific nesting sites used by previously wild Peregrine generations.

“Red Rocks is an extremely unique site. There is something about the site that attracts this sensitive species that escapes our explanation. It meets specific and unique criteria for successful nesting and survival of the species. There is no other site just like it.

“Today (4/6) there was a pair of birds back on Creation and Ship Rock, but the most significant sighting was watching the pair pursue and catch a pigeon in mid-air over the seating area of the theatre. I assume it was the male that caught the prey and passed it off to the female on the top of Creation Rock where the foray ended. Several tourists at the entrance witnessed the bird plucking the prey and were captivated by the sight. I managed to get off a couple of quick shots – the lighting was harsh. The falcon ate for a while in that spot and then carried the remainder of the catch to the Raven nest on Ship Rock, spent about 5 minutes there and cached what was left and then departed.”



Flushing a ptarmigan at Loveland Lift #6!

Loveland Ski Resort

Dave Wald emailed this photo with comments on March 27th, “Lisa & I just almost skied into a White-tailed Ptarmigan at top of lift #6 at Loveland!”

Sandhill Crane Migration





Migrating Sandhill Cranes on the Platte River in Nebraska

On March 31st, Melissa Leasia shared, “I would call my road trip to Gibbon, Nebraska, to view the Sandhill Crane migration, a trip of a lifetime...except that I plan to go back as often as I possibly can.

It was simply breathtaking-enough to bring one to tears. My pictures don't begin to do justice to the spectacle: 500,000 cranes taking off from their roost in the Platte River in the morning; cranes in every farm field-resting up and fueling up for the rest of their migration; and gathering together again and returning to the roost for the night.



Sandhill Crane viewing blind on the Platte River in Nebraska

Did I go alone? Not at all.

My sister Lucy Malone flew out from PA to go on this road trip with me; we had lunch with Ole friend Linda LeVan Miller in Lexington, NE, on the way; and we met up with Sarah Snapp, my dear friend from high school, and her charming and handsome husband Christian Davis, who drove down from St. Paul, MN.

You don't have to go all the way to Nebraska to see Sandhill

Cranes migrating, though.

On April 2nd, Beth Erland emailed, “Just wanted to let you know that a flock of about 30 sandhill cranes flew over my house off North Turkey Creek yesterday (April 1). They were headed north/northeast. So sweet to hear and see.”

National Eagle & Wildlife Property Repository



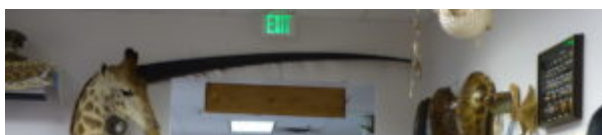
National Eagle & Wildlife Property Repository

I had the opportunity to visit and photograph this repository on the grounds of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal in late February, just before going on safari to Tanzania.

Operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it is a one-of-a-kind facility.

National Eagle Repository provides a central location for the receipt, storage, and distribution of bald and golden eagles that are found dead, and their parts.

The eagles, and their parts, are shipped to qualified Native Americans for use in religious Indian ceremonies.





Ranger talk at National Eagle & Wildlife Property Repository

National Wildlife Property Repository

Through law enforcement operations the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service confiscates animals, animal parts, and products created from them that have been illegally imported into this country. I saw and learned about the global aspects of illegal wildlife trade and the many, many species (both exotic and native) involved in this trade from all parts of the world, as well as, the effects the illegal trade has on our wildlife resources.

So glad that, after this extremely sobering experience, I got to see many of the exotic bird and mammal species that were confiscated and displayed at the repository, especially black rhinos, alive and healthy in the wild in Africa.

Bob Rozinski





Wendy Shattil and Bob Rozinski at Wild Cherry Canyon in the San Luis Valley to photograph fall color.

Sad news. Bob Rozinski died in his sleep Sunday, April 16th, after a recently diagnosed cancer. He was 77 years old. He is survived by Wendy Shattil, his partner in life and photography for 36 years. Bob and Wendy have been friends and supporters of Evergreen Audubon for many years and spoke at our annual banquet several years ago. Photo by Audrey Benedict.

Bob was an internationally recognized wildlife photographer published in hundreds of magazines and books. He was named the Conservationist of the Year and Business of the Year from the Colorado Wildlife Federation and endowed the Environmental Stewardship Award from the Denver Audubon.

A Fellow in the International League of Conservation Photographers, Bob was twice Artist in Residence at Rocky Mountain National Park and Department Associate at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

He won the Texas Valley Land Fund photo competition and the international Nature's Best photography contest, among others. He was the recipient of the Philip Hyde Grant for environmental photography.

Bob's style of showcasing wildlife's behavior while telling a story evolved from a photojournalism background with the Associated Press. He transformed these skills to nature subjects out of love for the outdoors.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Cloud Ridge

Naturalists, 8297 Overland Road, Ward, CO 80481 or the charity of your choice.