

BOULDER BIRD CLUB NEWS

Fifty-five Years Dedicated to the Field Observation of Birds

January, February, and March, 2002

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As of this writing I have received 28 responses to the members' survey that was enclosed with the last newsletter. The primary objectives of the survey were to obtain input on field trip options and to encourage leaders to step forward. Despite the relatively low response, I feel we accomplished both.

Many of the responses were predictable. Members expressed a preference for local trips over those outside the county or overnight trips; Saturdays over Sundays by a slight margin with weekdays trailing both; 8 a.m. starts over 7 or 9 a.m. starts; 3-hour trips over 2- or 4-hour trips with day-long trips trailing; and trips aimed at birders with some experience over those targeted at beginners.

I think that the responses reinforce our current attempts to maintain diverse trips. Along with First Sundays and Wednesday Roadrunners, the local, 3- or 4-hour, Saturday morning trip is often the mainstay of our schedule. Day-long trips and occasional overnight trips help reach exciting birding sites that are not practical on shorter trips. Variety is the spice of life and birding new areas on longer trips is an experience we should all try on occasion.

Interesting suggestions included more trips targeted at one or a few species (see the proposed Boreal Owl adventure in March) and the possibility of summer evening trips. A couple of people suggested that First Sunday trips in the warm months start at 8 a.m. while birds are more active. Another suggestion was that a subgroup of club members that are mobility-handicapped might want to get together to exchange birding ideas or visit sites. Please contact me directly ([PJPlage@aol.com] or 303-666-9827) to follow up on this last idea.

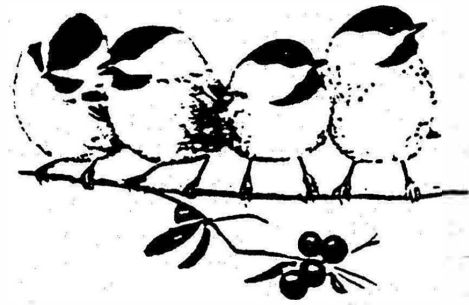
A number of folks volunteered to lead trips, but we could still use some others to fill out the year. Two or more people could co-lead a trip if taking on the role alone seems a little intimidating. Contact me or Gary Matthews with your ideas.

Pete Plage

P.S. The North America Bird Watching Trivia Game donated to the club last year by Wild Birds Unlimited is available for loan. Guaranteed to spur spirited discussions (read: arguments). Contact Pete Plage at 303-666-9827.

BEGINNING BIRDWATCHING CLASS

The BBC's own Suzi Plooster will be teaching a beginning birdwatching class this spring at the East Boulder Senior Center (5660 Sioux Drive). Dates are March 11, 18, 25, and 30th — that's three classroom sessions and one field trip. Pre-registration is required. Register at the East Boulder Senior Center or call 303-441-4150. Registration begins Feb 15th for Seniors 60 and over; March 1 for those under 60 (call ahead to put your name on the waiting list). The cost is \$30 for Boulder city residents and \$37 for non-residents.



ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY A GREAT SUCCESS!

Thanks to the Plage Family for hosting the annual holiday party on December 9th, to Helga Sproul for organizing it, to Joan Dawson for helping with set-up, and to all those who brought goodies to share. The mild weather brought out a big crowd, and a good time was had by all.

A short business meeting was held at the party. As usual, the Boulder Bird Club has entirely too much money in the bank (due to those exorbitant \$6.00 dues), so we are looking for new ways to spend it. Some suggestions that have been made are a bench near the parking lot at Walden, birdhouses at Walden, and seed for nursing homes and for the Center for Disabilities' new adaptive garden.

Pete also asked for more volunteers to help with newsletter mailings. As the club grows ever larger, the mailings become harder to do with only a few helpers. Volunteers are needed to help stuff envelopes, and to make phone calls to organize envelope stuffers. In 2002, the mailing parties will occur in late March, late June, late September, and mid-December. Call Pete Plage at 303-666-9827 if you would like to help out.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The annual Boulder Audubon Christmas Bird Count will be held this year on Saturday, December 22nd. This year is the 102nd year of Christmas Bird Counts nationwide, and the counts in Boulder date back to 1909. The long series of data from these counts tells us a great deal about wintering bird populations. A report on this year's count will be included in the next newsletter.

THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS:

Many thanks to those who led trips during October, November, and December: Fern Ford, Gary Matthews, Suzi and Myron Plooster, Beth Partin, Dick Pratt, Pete Plage, Ray Davis, and Lynda Simmons. Volunteer participation like this is vital to the success of the Boulder Bird Club.

WINTER BIRD FEEDING

At this time of year birds appreciate extra treats. For an easy feeder, dry half a bagel overnight, spread with peanut butter on each side and sprinkle with seeds. Tie a string through the hole and hang it outside.

WINTER BIRDS

There was no covert for the birds

And yet I heard them sing
As joyously as if the trees
Were canopied with spring.

And though the way is still obscure

That you and I must go,
Yet all my hopes, like winter birds,
Sing on amid the snow.



Common Redpoll by Lorry McQueen (detail of painting)

Elinor MacArthur

BIRDING FOOTNOTES

Nancy and Bob Morton took a trip to Scotland in Sept/Oct. At the Scottish Seabird Center, they watched Gannets via a live TV camera aimed at the birds. Other sightings included Sparrow Hawk, White Wagtail, English Robin, Magpie, Jackdaw, and Brambling Finch... Hope Leighton attended the Kansas Ornithological Society fall conference in early October... Jan Chu was at Depoe Bay, on the Oregon coast, and saw many Western Gulls, Western Gull/Glaucous Gull hybrids, Black Turnstones — and Gray Whales... Pete Plage just returned from a work trip to San Diego where he saw three life birds in fifteen minutes at the north jetty of the Mission Bay inlet: Surfbird, Wandering Tattler, and Black Turnstone... Several BBC members are planning to join Bill Turner on the trip he is leading to Costa Rica in Jan/Feb... Wes Sears and Suzi Plooster gave a program for Boulder County Audubon, Nov. 27th, on "Birding in Australia"... In October, Suzi Plooster spoke on "Birding Thru The Year," for a group at First Presbyterian Church... Ferd and Jo Dirckx led a birding field trip for Broomfield Parks and Open Space in October.

BBC OFFICERS

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Membership Janet Chu, 303-494-1108, chuhouse@hotmail.com
Sightings Jay Sproul (303) 444-5550, jhsproul@att.net

BIRDING IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

After reading about birding festivals, and doing much thinking and researching, Margaret and I decided to drive to Texas for the 5-day 8th Annual Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival at Harlingen, November 14-18th. I thought I could find most of the target birds on my own but decided a half-day field trip each day would be helpful, as it was our first trip to the area. Any birds missed could be picked up in a few additional days. By using the ABA Resource Guide, I'd located birders from the nearby towns who were willing to go out for a day.

The festival was more than I expected. The very knowledgeable trip leaders were always helpful and the festival staffing was well organized and efficient. In 5+ days my life list increased by 52 bird species, among them Zone-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Red-billed Pigeon, Least Grebe, Ringed and Green Kingfishers, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Altamira and Audubon's Orioles, a few sparrows, and Buff-bellied Hummingbird. A few days later we added Red-crowned and Yellow-headed Parrots, Green Parakeets, and Roseate Spoonbills.

We missed some birds that others saw, including Hook-billed Kite, Aplomado Falcon, Groove-billed Ani, White-collared Seedeater, and Clay-colored Robin. But that gives us a good reason to return at another time. Whooping Cranes didn't show at Aransas, but while videoing an active trail of leaf cutting ants at ground level, I "discovered" chiggers. They provided extra entertainment (scratch) on the way home. Only hours after returning to Longmont on November 25th a snowstorm arrived. (Scratch.) Am I glad chiggers can't fly!

Jerry Spangler

VISTA

by Jack Collom, late September '01

Four twisted cottonwoods (yellow & green),
ragged line just east of the rustic
luxurious Gunnison Valley cabin I'm in,
also just above marsh, crescent-pond-with-algae, beyond.

To the south's a big sage ridge
sporting the small reintroduced antelope herd...
Tomichi ("wandering" in Ute) Creek meanders between,
where coyotes lope and lounge through thick grass.

Just now, robinsong from a high branch.
Brewer's and red-winged blackbirds
pepper the scene for a twilit hour.
Fall yellow-rumped warblers love it here;

they zigzag continually
faster than eye can see
through these particular trees,
the aforesaid 4 cottonwoods (which are really 6 contorted trunks).

And orangecrowns have darkly populated
the lower tangles
of this raggedy, raggedy line
along with lispings white-crowned sparrows.

Once a mountain bluebird (powder blue)
sat still for minutes
on the dead snag
reaching out north toward Highway 50.

As of this moment I've
been staying here exactly one week.
Male kingfisher rattled by the other day.

Sat a while ago with hosts Anne and Gary (Hausler)
outside their huge house late morning
eating sweet crumbly coffeecake,
and twenty sandhill cranes flew spiraling over the ridge
heading for Monte Vista.

Canada geese honk,
mallards panic, teal
skedaddle over water,
Lincoln's sparrow gurgles from the willow bush.

Ravens pace the fall-orange fields
everywhichway (plus harrier once),
produce unexpectedly inventive
"Hoo-hoos" in the cottonwoods.

Once a redtail, chased by
assorted corvids, fled,
assumed its ravenous bulk
elsewhere.

At night I sleep OK
(without pills - forgot) - wake up 6-ish
to miscellaneous interrogations, wind and sun
somehow in through/out the six whole cottonwood boles.

All these focused birds
were mystifying at first:
the first-year whitecrowns, with reddish caps,
"confusing fall warblers," nondescript warbling vireos,

young house sparrows round the horse barns,
starlings grinding the morning air
after the great horned owl has
blown holes in the darkness.

& I don't know why
I've carved the poem lines in 4's
when any number of things
blow down the valley

and settle, it seems,
momentarily
among the endless complications of
the 4 cottonwoods,

which I could
sit and
watch
forever

(Reproduced with permission of the author.)

Jack read this during a celebration on November 30, 2001 which the Boulder City Council proclaimed as Jack Collom Day.

	DATE TRIP	9/2 FS	9/5 WR S-SM	9/12 WR GC	9/15 NEC	9/19 WR SM	9/26 WR SL	9/29 RM+L	10/7 FS	10/13 CR	10/20 DWD	11/4 FS	11/10 COL	11/18 R&M
Common Loon					C								X	
Pied-billed Grebe					A						X	X	X	
Horned Grebe					N								X	
Eared Grebe					C			X					X	
Western Grebe					E			X			X		X	
American White Pelican					L								X	X
Double-crested Cormorant		X	X		D		X	X		X	X		X	
Great Blue Heron		X					X	X	X		X	X	X	
Black-crowned Night-Heron		X			L		X	X					X	
Canada Goose		X			E		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wood Duck					A						X			
Green-winged Teal					D				X			X		X
Mallard		X	X		E		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Pintail			X		R				X			X	X	
Blue-winged Teal		X							X					
Northern Shoveler			X		S		X				X	X	X	
Gadwall					T				X	X	X	X	X	
American Wigeon			X		R				X		X	X	X	X
Canvasback					A						X		X	
Redhead					N			X			X		X	
Ring-necked Duck					D				X		X	X	X	
Lesser Scaup					E								X	
Common Goldeneye					D								X	X
Bufflehead											X		X	X
Hooded Merganser					B								X	X
Common Merganser					Y					X			X	
Ruddy Duck								X			X		X	
Turkey Vulture		X		X	9	X								
Osprey					11			X	X					
Bald Eagle												X	X	
Northern Harrier							X				X	X	X	X
Sharp-shinned Hawk				X				X	X				X	
Cooper's Hawk								X				X		
Swainson's Hawk		X	X							X				
Red-tailed Hawk				X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Ferruginous Hawk								X						X
Rough-legged Hawk												X		
Golden Eagle													X	X
American Kestrel		X					X	X	X		X	X	X	X
American Coot								X			X		X	
Killdeer		X	X				X		X	X	X			
Lesser Yellowlegs		X	X						X					
Greater Yellowlegs		X	X						X			X		
Solitary Sandpiper		X												
Spotted Sandpiper			X						X					
Western Sandpiper		X												
Baird's Sandpiper		X	X											
Common Snipe		X	X						X					
Wilson's Phalarope			X											
Bonaparte's Gull													X	
Ring-billed Gull		X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
California Gull														X
Herring Gull										X				X
Forster's Tern										X				
Rock Dove			X				X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Mourning Dove		X						X	X					
Great Horned Owl							X					X		

BOULDER BIRD CLUB FIELD TRIPS

January 1 (Tuesday): Waterfowl on the South Platte.

Celebrate the New Year with a great start on your year list!! Join Suzi and Myron on their annual New Year's outing and bird along the South Platte trail in the area of 88th Street and the Platte. Meet at 8:00 AM (call leaders for meeting place). Plan on walking and birding until early afternoon. Dress for cold weather and bring snacks and money for lunch. Carpool \$2.00. Leaders – Suzi and Myron Plooster (303-494-6708).

Must contact leaders before attending this trip.

January 6: First Sunday Birding. Walden Wildlife Habitat.* Meet at Cottonwood Marsh at 9:00 AM, bird until noon. Leader – Jeff Yegian (303-554-4452).

January 26 (Saturday): Raptor Rehabilitation. Visit the Raptor Rehabilitation Center in Broomfield; we may see Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks and Ferruginous Hawks up close. Trip is limited to 20 people. Meet at the East Boulder Recreation Center** at 9:00 and carpool to Broomfield; return to Boulder by noon. Carpool \$1.00. Leader – Gary Matthews (303-447-1463). **Must make reservation with leader before attending this trip.**

February 3: First Sunday Birding. Walden Wildlife

Habitat.* Meet at Cottonwood Marsh at 9:00 AM, bird until noon. Leader – Dianna Johnston (303-682-5662).

February 9 (Saturday): Mountain Birding. Carpool to sites along the Peak to Peak Highway in search of Rosy Finches, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Clark's Nutcracker, and other mountain birds. Return by early afternoon. Dress for cold weather. Bring money for lunch at a restaurant stop. Meet at the Justice Center at 6th and Canyon at 8:00 AM. Carpool \$2.00. Leader – Bill Kaempfer (303-443-3175). **If weather is questionable, call Bill or Gary Matthews (303-447-1463) to confirm trip.**

March 2 (Saturday): Gulls and More. Travel to local areas where gulls and waterbirds congregate. This is a great chance to learn the techniques of gull identification from an expert as well as see a variety of waterbirds. Dress for the weather. Bring lunch and a scope and plan on birding until afternoon. Meet at the Niwot Park-and-Ride (Niwot Road and Highway 119) at 7:00 AM. Carpool \$2.00. Leader – John Vanderpoel (303-652-3678). **If weather is questionable, call John or Gary Matthews (303-447-1463) to confirm trip.**

March 3: First Sunday Birding. Walden Wildlife Habitat.* Meet at Cottonwood Marsh at 9:00 AM, bird until noon. Leaders – Jim and Darleen Eide (303-443-6263).

March 16 (Saturday): Eastern Colorado. Join Bill Kaempfer for a full day-trip to the Flagler State Wildlife Area (and possibly Bonny Reservoir) on the eastern plains. We will look for raptors, wintering waterfowl and early migrants. Dress for weather. Bring lunch and drink, and Talkabout radio if you have one. Meet at the East Boulder Rec Center** at 6:00 AM and plan on a full day of birding. Carpool \$10 to driver. Leader – Bill Kaempfer (303-443-3175). **If weather is questionable, call Bill or Gary Matthews (303-447-1463) to confirm trip.**

March 27 (Wednesday): Owl Adventure. Boreal Owls are often heard on Cameron Pass in the spring. Join other intrepid birders for a late night of listening for owls on the Pass. The group will leave the Boulder area about 5:00 PM and plan to return by 1:00 AM. Dress for very cold weather. Bring supper and drink. Carpool \$5 to driver. Leader – Gary Matthews (303-447-1463). **Call leader for meeting place and to confirm that weather is amenable for this adventure.**

*Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat - off N 75th between Valmont and Jay Rd to Cottonwood Marsh parking lot.

**East Boulder Rec Center - 5660 Sioux Drive, off 55th St.

between Baseline & South Boulder Rd, west end parking lot.

Contact trip leaders for information on their trips. Our weather can be unpredictable. For questions about details or whether the trip will take place, contact the trip leader.

Trip Sign-Up Sheets: Everyone who attends a BBC trip MUST sign the sign-up sheet before being allowed on the trip. By signing the sheet, each person declares that he/she is solely responsible for his/her safety, and in no way will hold the Club, trip leader, or any participating person responsible for his/her safety. Sign in every time, please. Anyone under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Carpooling On Trips: We carpool on all Boulder Bird Club trips. Trips within city limits are \$.50 each. Countywide trips are \$1.00 each. For longer trips, we will give the amount with the trip description. Please be prepared with the right amount.

Trip Leaders: The BBC scope and two-way radios are available for use by trip leaders on all trips. Call Pete Plage (303-666-9827) and remember to return them after the trip.

SATURDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS

The Wild Bird Center sponsors **Saturday** morning bird walks to different birding spots in the Boulder area. Be at the store by 7:20 AM and return by 9:45. Departure from the Boulder store on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month and from the Longmont store on the 2nd and 4th. No bird walks on a 5th Saturday. Call the Wild Bird Center at 303-442-1322.

BOULDER OPEN SPACE/MTN PARKS HIKES

(note: these hikes are generally aimed at beginning birders).

February 2 (Saturday) Winter Raptor Watch. 10am-1pm. Slide show and van tour looking for wintering birds of prey. Call 303-441-3440 for reservation and location.

February 16 (Saturday) Reservoir Raptors. 9-11am. Meet at the main entrance to Boulder Reservoir off 51st Street. Easy hiking in the cold. Birders of all abilities welcome.

February 27 (Wednesday) Owl Moon. 8-10pm. Easy nighttime hike into the world of owls. Meet at Sawhill Ponds (75th between Valmont & Jay). Dress warmly.

March 17 (Sunday) Welcome Back to the Waterfowl. 1-2:30 pm. Spring hike around Sawhill Ponds to view returning migratory birds. Dress for cold, and bring water.

BBC MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

We invite you to join the Boulder Bird Club. Membership is \$6.00 per year for any number of persons at one address. Because our dues are minimal, no partial-year memberships are available. Members receive our quarterly newsletter, a 10% discount on merchandise (5% on optics) from the Wild Bird Center, a 10% discount on merchandise from Wild Birds Unlimited, and the opportunity to take part in more than 50 field trips each year — a real bargain for \$6.00. Please send your check with completed membership form to Janet Chu, 964 Ravenwood Road, Boulder, CO 80303.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

This newsletter is published four times a year. We welcome articles, suggestions for articles, photos/drawings, poems, and of course, news of your birding activities. The editor is very grateful for all contributions! Deadline for the April-May-June issue is March 10. Send stuff to Margaret Luebs, 3727 Talisman Place #D, Boulder, CO 80301, call her at 720-564-1445 (leave message). or e-mail her at maluebs@indra.com

Please send all address and phone number changes to Janet Chu, 964 Ravenwood Rd., Boulder, CO 80303, phone 303-494-1108, or e-mail chuhouse@hotmail.com

Please save your newsletter as a future resource for trips and activities.

