

**BOULDER BIRD CLUB  
NEWSLETTER**

<http://www.boulderbirdclub.org>

***Dedicated to the Field Observation  
of Birds Since 1947  
July – September 2020***

***President's letter – Summer 2020***

Summer has arrived as we continue to deal with the pandemic, COVID-19. We've adjusted to social distancing and staying safe which is our new normal for now. I patiently look forward to the unknown day that we will be back on our birding trails as the happy, enthusiastic, social group we enjoyed in the past.

What have I been doing this past Spring? First Sunday resumed on June 7 with 2 groups of 5 signing up to bird from different starting points while observing social distancing and wearing required masks. It was a great morning of birding! Wednesday Roadrunners also resumed on June 10 with a limit of 6 participants. The format has been set by our Field Trip Coordinator, Gary Baxley, to try and keep our club viable during these times with participation from interested club members. Thanks to Gary and those interested birders. I'm sure those who have participated have enjoyed a chance to catch up with each other and enjoy birding together. I was able to enjoy the June First Sunday and June 10 Roadrunners. Then I stepped aside to allow other members to fill the available slots.

My spring birding (by ear) has been mostly walking the Louisville city streets/alleys as, unfortunately, the open space trails felt too crowded and risky to walk for my comfort level. It feels safer and I have no complaints.

I've also enjoyed the birds in my yard. A male and female Spotted Towhee are often in the yard foraging and frequently calling. These birds love bathing in the patio bird bath and in our small 3-tiered fountain. They hop in, splash around, hop out and wipe off their bill, hop back in and splash some more, and repeat this routine several more times. It's so fun to watch them! I just haven't seen any

evidence of offspring. Speaking of offspring: I've observed the feeding of Eastern Blue Jay, House Finch, House Sparrow and Downy Woodpecker fledglings in the tree just off my patio. I also observed three young spot-breasted American Robins sipping water and even successfully bathing in the water that had puddled on the patio from the bird bath overflow. I've seen Broad-tailed Hummingbirds visiting garden flowers. My bird house originally hung for chickadees but never used by them was used by House Wrens for a few years. This year a House Sparrow beat the wren to the nesting spot and fledged 2 young. Following that, I was surprised to see the House Sparrows commence nest building in the Ash tree that shades the better part of the back yard. They used a lot of my garden mulch and sticks and twigs from around the neighborhood. From below it looks like a good-sized structure. I always thought these birds were cavity nesters, but my online research proved not always. Nature takes its course and I hope it all works out including the continued survival of the Ash tree.

As we navigate the summer months, I hope each of you are able to continue what feels best and right for your health and enjoyment of birding in the wonderful environment in which we live. Everyone, good birding, stay safe and stay positive.

Sharon Norfleet  
BBC President



**Welcome, new members!  
Hope to see you soon!  
Suzanne Milani  
Melissa Gardner**

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## Summer Field Trips 2020

### Gary Baxley

For the next quarter, field trips will be organized in the following manner. Hopefully, things will get back to normal in the near future.

- No carpooling, and cloth masks are required.
- One group of 6, wearing cloth masks and using social distancing, for Wednesday birding at different locations. Each location will be announced during the call in. We will rotate participants each week so that everyone gets a chance to get together. We will meet at the birding location instead of at the Rec. Center. On the Sunday, before the Wednesday birding trip, people that want to participate will contact me from 7:30 PM to 8:00PM by email. When all slots are filled, I will send an email informing everyone.
- On first Sunday, we have 3 and only 3 groups of six each. Everyone wears cloth masks and practices social distancing. One group will meet at the east end of the Cottonwood Marsh parking area, one at the west end of Cottonwood Marsh parking area and one at the Heatherwood trail parking area at 75th and Boulder Creek. We will start at 7:30 AM to insure everyone can park. Only 18 people can participate. People will have to sign up. The email sign up time will start at 7:30 PM on Friday night and end at 8:00PM, before the first Sunday date. First come first served. One person from each group will lead. When all slots are filled, I will send an email informing everyone.



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©Peter Ridgeway

Lazuli Bunting, Fowler Trail 6-10-2020

I know this all sounds somewhat tedious, but we should make an effort to keep in touch to ensure that the BBC remains a viable birding group.

Your participation on a Boulder Bird Club field trip declares that you will assume full responsibility for your own welfare, and will in no way hold any trip leaders, drivers or the Club responsible for you in any situation.

All birding trips will start at 7:30 AM.

All listed field trip locations are suggested, except the Barr Lake Bird Banding trip and first Sunday at Walden. We have a scheduled appointment for the Barr Lake trip. Further details will be posted on a later date.

**Wednesday, July 1, 2020**  
**HEIL VALLEY RANCH**  
**7:30 am to 11:00 am**

**Sunday, July 5, 2020**  
**FIRST SUNDAY BIRDING AT WALDEN**  
**WILDLIFE HABITAT**  
**7:30 am to around 11:00 am**

**Wednesday, July 8, 2020**  
**TELLER FARMS**  
**7:30 am to 11:00 am**

**Wednesday, July 15, 2020**  
**GOLDEN GATE CANYON STATE PARK**  
**7:30 AM to 1:00 PM**

**Wednesday, July 22, 2020**  
**SANDSTONE RANCH**  
**7:30 am to 11:00 am**

**Wednesday, July 29, 2020**  
**PELLA CROSSING**  
**7:30 am to 11:00 am**

**Sunday, August 2, 2020**  
**FIRST SUNDAY BIRDING AT WALDEN**  
**WILDLIFE HABITAT**  
**7:30 am to 11:00 am**

**Wednesday, August 5, 2020**  
**CU RESEARCH PARK BOULDER CREEK**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Wednesday, August 12, 2020**  
**OLD SOUTH ST. VRAIN ROAD, LYONS**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Wednesday, August 19, 2020**  
**RABBIT MOUNTAIN**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Wednesday, August 26, 2020**  
**BRAINARD LAKE RECREATION AREA**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am+**

**Wednesday, September 2, 2020**  
**LAGERMAN RESERVOIR**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Sunday, September 6, 2020**  
**FIRST SUNDAY BIRDING AT WALDEN**  
**WILDLIFE HABITAT**  
**7:30 am to 11:00 am**

**Wednesday September 9, 2020**  
**GOLDEN PONDS**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Wednesday September 16, 2020**  
**GREENLEE PRESERVE**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Saturday September 19, 2020**  
**BARR LAKE ST. PARK - Bird Banding**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Wednesday, September 23, 2020**  
**CARIBOU RANCH**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am**

**Wednesday, September 30, 2020**  
**Stearns Lake**  
**7:30 am – 11:00 am**



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©Peter Ridgeway, Western Wood-Pewee, Walden Ponds Complex, 6-7-2020

## **PANDEMIC BIRDING IN BOULDER, SPRING 2020 – Dick Pautsch**

We'd just returned from a California desert trip when everything was shut down. I showed up at the East Boulder Rec parking lot on March 18, and 4 of us went on what turned out to be the last BBC trip for a while.

Since the trails were still open, we tried to take a hike most days. I would come up with a target bird species and a place I might find it when picking where to walk. We found a Cinnamon Teal near Marshall on March 25, our target Towhee on a walk from the house on the 26th, and our Mountain Bluebirds at Boulder Valley Ranch the next day. I stretched the rules a bit and drove to Brighton on March 28 to add a Mew Gull to my state list. I marveled at how few vehicles were on the highways (and wondered where they were going). I haven't been out of the county in the 3 months since then.

The most interesting birding event of the spring season was the invasion of Boulder by Cassin's Finches on April 13th. It was a snowy, socked-in day with a low ceiling. I could see them while sitting at my desk. They were back again on the 16th when the weather was similar.

I had carefully planned out my annual drive to the Appalachians for spring migrants (I was going to drive as far as New Jersey and back), but that was now out. So, instead, I looked for local species as they returned with spring, often at spots we'd taken field trips. I saw my first Common Grackles on April 11th, White Pelicans on April 15, Yellow Warblers, Great-tailed Grackles, Say's Phoebe, Rough-wing Swallows, Cowbirds, and House Wrens at Walden on May 1. On May 11, I found lots of Western Tanagers where I'd found them last year at 4-mile creek, plus Lincoln Sparrows, Bullock's Orioles and Orange-crowned Warblers. I went to look for Clay-colored Sparrows at Community Gardens and was surprised to find a male Lark Bunting as well. The Bobolinks returned to Cherryvale on June 2, joining the Savannah Sparrows already

there. I found a group of Rock Wrens on the rocky hill across from Marshall School on a geology hike earlier that morning. Figuring that more people were looking for something to read on CoBirds while there were fewer other things to do, I posted what I saw to help entertain my fellow birders.

But my most astounding bird observation was of a mother Canada Goose who stayed on her nest on a tiny island in the Kids' Fishing Pond through 2 blizzards to successfully hatch her brood of goslings:



©Dick Pautsch, Boulder Creek

## **My Spring 2020 Birding - Carolyn Beach**

I decided that outside in the fresh air looking for birds is the safest place to be during this pandemic outbreak, so that is what I've done. At first by myself and later with Jane Baryames and Janice Rogers and most recently with Diane Carter. Also, occasionally running into a birding friend and walking along with that person. I don't know if my incredible birding experiences were because there were so few people out and about, or if I've just been super attuned to finding the birds, but this has absolutely been the best spring of my birding career. Almost every outing ends up with a list of 30 species or more. Old South Saint Vrain Road has always been one of my favorites but this spring it has been incredible. Walden has also been very productive, and Diane and I went to Nebraska last week and we had a great time. I even had two life birds on that trip, a Cassin's Sparrow and Black Terns. I'm sure I'll have more wonderful springs to



come but this one has been extra special for me and I won't soon forget it.



©Carolyn Beach, Burrowing Owl, 6-17-2020



©Carolyn Beach, American Bittern, 6-17-2020

### **Stay-At-Home Birding Spring 2020 – Jane Baryames**

When Stay-At-Home commenced March 25<sup>th</sup>, I decided to do most of my birding solo in my patch, Chautauqua Park. I am fortunate enough to live a half-block away, and before the pandemic, I would frequently take solo bird hikes in my patch on Mondays. Since March 25<sup>th</sup>, I have posted about 50 Chautauqua checklists to eBird. Over the years, I have reported 77 bird species here. This spring I enjoyed witnessing the spring migration unfold, especially happy when the Broad-tailed Hummingbirds arrived (April

10<sup>th</sup>) as well as my favorite bird, the Yellow-breasted Chat (May 4<sup>th</sup>). I witnessed nest building activity by Black-billed Magpies, Mountain Chickadees, Black-capped Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pygmy Nuthatches, Hairy Woodpeckers, Western Tanagers, Lesser Goldfinches, Pine Siskins, House Wrens, Dark-eyed Juncos. Over several weeks I observed a pair of American Kestrels hanging around the Chautauqua Auditorium, devouring voles for breakfast.



©Jane Baryames, American Kestrel with vole, Chautauqua Park, 6-1-2020

By taking the same route most days, I learned where to expect to see certain species. One of the MacGillivray's Warblers next to the Lower McClintock Trail across from the Picnic Shelter. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher pair near the first large Conifer at the beginning of the McClintock Trail. The Yellow-breasted Chats in the meadow east of the Auditorium. The Red-breasted Nuthatch pair and their nest on the Enchanted Mesa Trail. The dead tree near the Kohler Trailhead at Enchanted Mesa Trail which housed a Hairy Woodpecker nest, a Pygmy Nuthatch nest and a House Wren nest. The Virginia's Warbler about  $\frac{3}{4}$  up the McClintock Trail. I was grateful to Paula Hansley who identified my voice recording of the Virginia's Warbler. Now when I hear one, I stop and listen for a few minutes to help cement its song in my memory. An Ovenbird showed up just off the Mesa Trail and I was able to

observe it for several days. I was fortunate to observe two Pygmy Nuthatch fledglings the day they left the nest and were fed by their parents.



©Jane Baryames, Pygmy Nuthatch fledgling, Enchanted Mesa Trail, 6-5-2020

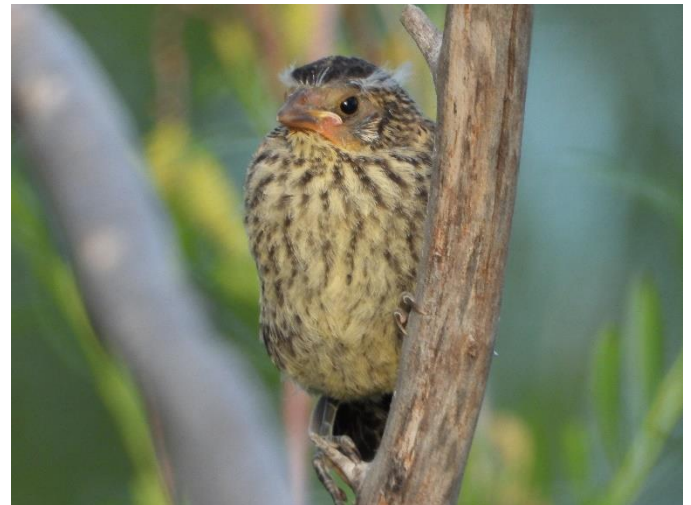
I have joined Carolyn Beach and Janice Rogers several times for bird walks. We wear our masks and keep our "social distance". It's nice to keep company with two of my birding friends. I miss our group and look forward to the time when we can all flock together again.



### **Spring 2020 Birding Janice Rogers**

These few months of restricted activities have encouraged me to go birding almost every day. It was great in early spring with no leaves on the trees - easy to see the birds. Birding by myself forced me to find the

birds and identify the birds myself instead of depending on others to do this for me. Birding every day improved my birding skills including quicker and more accurate use of the binoculars. By yourself you are always looking for the birds instead of getting involved in conversations. Listening for bird songs gets better - no distractions due to socializing. Further into the COVID-19 pandemic, I accidentally met up with Jane once and Carolyn another time and it was great to see them and bird with them. The three of us have since birded together once or twice a week, wearing masks and staying 6 feet apart. On these outings I have learned more bird songs (hard to do by myself), taken better photos, and certainly seen more birds. I look forward to getting back to birding with more friends from the Boulder Birding Club.



©Janice Rogers, Red-winged Blackbird fledgling, Walden Ponds complex, 6-7-2020

### **Gosh, I miss all you guys- Nancy Morrison**

I see so many more birdies with y'all spotting and I have no one to "shush" my talking on the trail as we listen for songs. Just yesterday I got a reservation time at RMNP and hiked a new trail for me, Deer Mountain with the trailhead starting up at convergence of Hwy 36 and Hwy 34. Scampering like a squirrel, I watched a Three-Toed Woodpecker run for 20 feet straight up a pine tree trunk pecking for insects without stopping. Yes, I got continuous pix but all were blurry as he was



moving and I was rather excited. My second-best sighting was our Red-headed Woodpecker on Fowler Trail last week with sharp eyed Iris and Joy (we social distanced).

These pandemic situations help me feel so grateful for many things, especially our human friendships and for our birdies who amazingly migrate through hardships and return.



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Red-headed Woodpecker, Fowler Trail, 6-10-2020

### ***Did You Know?***

This past April, many local birders noticed a huge fallout of Cassin's Finches, probably taking a pause in their migration due to a big snowstorm. In memory of this event, I thought I'd share this info from Wikipedia:

**John Cassin** (September 6, 1813 – January 10, 1869) was an American ornithologist. A Pennsylvania Quaker and businessman, he took up an unpaid position as curator of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences and published several books, and described numerous species of bird.

Cassin was born in Upper Providence Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania near Philadelphia on September 6, 1813. Though his ancestors were Quakers, several had distinguished themselves in military and naval service.

A careful and talented taxonomist, Cassin named 198 birds not described in the works of his

predecessors Alexander Wilson and John James Audubon. He is commemorated himself in the names of a number of birds from western North America, including the Cassin's Auklet, Cassin's Kingbird, Cassin's Vireo, Cassin's Sparrow, and Cassin's Finch. He was commemorated by other naturalists as well. Samuel Washington Woodhouse, for example, named Cassin's Sparrow (*Peucaea cassinii*) for John Cassin. The periodic cicada *Magicicada cassinii* is also named for him. Cassin drew, engraved, and colored many of the illustrations published in the Pacific Railroad Surveys.

Named curator of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences in 1842, Cassin described many new bird species and revised a number of families in the Academy's publications. His more extensive publications include *Birds of California*, with descriptions and colored engravings of fifty species not given by Audubon; *Synopsis of the Birds of North America*; *Ornithology of the United States Exploring Expedition*; *Ornithology of the Japan Expedition*; *Ornithology of Gillis's Astronomical Expedition to Chile*; and chapters on raptorial birds and waders in *Ornithology of the Pacific Railroad Explorations and Surveys*.

Only one volume appeared of the most ambitious of Cassin's works, the *Illustrations of the Birds of California, Texas, Oregon, British and Russian America* (1853–56). He also served as co-author, with Spencer Fullerton Baird and George Newbold Lawrence, of *Birds of North America* (1860).

He died in 1869 of arsenic poisoning caused by his handling of bird skins preserved with arsenic. His collection, some 4300 birds, was purchased for \$500 by John Whipple Potter Jenks for Brown University's new museum of natural history.

He is buried at Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia.



©Jane Baryames, Cassin's Finch, her backyard, 4-13-2020