

NATURE NEWS

Volume 19, Number 4
Fall, 2002

So, who is Guy Fawkes?

Every year Naseem and Mike hold the Guy Fawkes Potluck and Bonfire Party around the first week in November. This year's event is November 2 (see next page for details). Have you ever wondered who Guy Fawkes was? And what the connection is to bonfire? Here's what I found:

"November 5th is known as "Guy Fawkes Night", and all over Britain people fire off fireworks, light bonfires, and burn effigies of Guy Fawkes. GuyFawkes was an Englishman who, in popular legend, tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament with barrels of gunpowder. He was caught, tortured, imprisoned, and finally executed.

Guy Fawkes was a co-conspirator in the "Gunpowder Plot" of 1605 in England. He and his cohorts decided to blow up the Houses of Parliament in London, and succeeded in smuggling several barrels of gunpowder into the basement.

The plot was foiled at the eleventh hour; some of the plotters escaped, some turned King's Evidence and reported on the rest. The unlucky Fawkes was taken in chains to the Tower of London and beheaded at dawn. He was hanged, drawn and quartered. The charge was treason, though some people in England prefer to remember Guy as "the only man ever to enter Parliament with honest intentions."

To this day, one of the ceremonies that accompany the opening of a new session of parliament, is the searching of the basement, by a bunch of men in funny hats. Parliament somehow made political capital out of the close call, and poor Guido Fawkes is burned in effigy every November 5th on bonfires all over Britain. They sell a lot of fireworks too, and children beg for money on the streets to buy them. The children usually exhibit the "guy" or dummy that will be put on the fire. "Penny for the guy, mister?" is a common refrain at this time of year."

Source: Bill Petro, *History of Holidays*;
www.billpetro.com/HolidayHistory/default.htm
(He's got lots of fun info.)

Inside . . .

Fall Calendar

Upcoming Classes

Good Spring and
Summer for
High Country Birds

Wildlife Update

The Joys Of Zealous
Listing

Summer Firefly Watching,
And Appropriate
Lightning Bug Music

Around Town

BCNA Directory

Extra copies of the newsletter are available from the BCNA or sometimes at the Wild Bird Center.

To submit BCNA-related material to the editor, email susanwinter@qwest.net or call 303-581-0783.



summer calendar



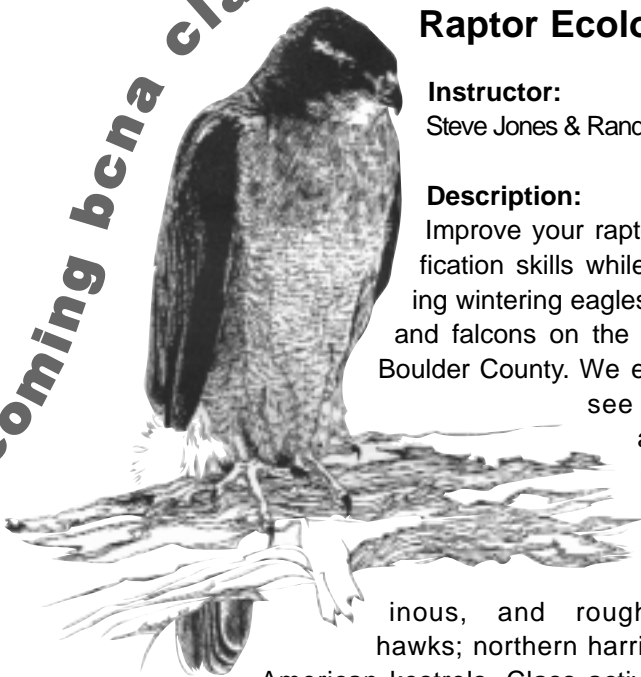
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Saturday, October 19: *Organizational meeting for wintering raptor survey.* New volunteers and volunteers who want to practice field identification are encouraged to come. Boulder Reservoir west entrance, 9-11:30 am. Bring binoculars and a spotting scope, if you have one. Information: Steve Jones (303-494-2468; stvjones@peakpeak.com)

nov
Saturday, November 2: Annual Guy Fawkes/ Halloween, Pot-Luck, Pot-Latch Party. Aloha `oukou!: this year's theme is Polynesian. Dinner at 6:30 pm. Bonfire (if they lift the ban) to follow. For directions, please call Naseem or Mike at (303) 673-0933.

dec
Sunday, November 24: BCNA Board of Directors meeting and potluck. All members are welcome at these bi-monthly meetings. Business meeting begins at 4 pm, potluck at 6 pm. Naseem and Mike's place, 8595 119th, Lafayette. 303-673-0933

Saturday, December 21: *Winter Solstice sunrise hike on White Rocks Trail.* Join us for our annual celebration of the new year. If you would like, bring a song, poem, or thought to share at an informal sunrise ceremony at the Boulder Creek bridge. We will meet at Teller Farms parking area, on Valmont one-half mile west of 95th Street, at 7 am. Optional breakfast to follow in Niwot around 9 am. Please RSVP for breakfast to Steve Jones (stvjones@peakpeak.com).

upcoming bcna classes



Raptor Ecology

Instructor:

Steve Jones & Randy Gietzen

Description:

Improve your raptor identification skills while observing wintering eagles, hawks, and falcons on the plains of Boulder County. We expect to see golden and bald eagles; red-tailed, ferruginous, and rough-legged hawks; northern harriers; and American kestrels. Class activities will focus on raptor behavior, habitat use, and conservation.

Membership Renewal Time Again!!!

Don't forget to renew your membership and pay your dues.

Renewal rates:

Student/Senior	\$10
General Member	\$15
Family or Household	\$20
Supporter	\$30
Subscriber	\$50
Founder	\$100
Life Member	\$300

Dates:

Thursday, Nov. 14, 7-9 p.m., indoor class
Saturday, Nov. 16, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., field class
Saturday, Dec. 7, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., field class

Tuition:

\$70 (\$60 for BCNA members)
Limited to 15 participants.

Equipment:

Binoculars and a standard bird field guide. We recommend the Sibley, National Geographic, Peterson, or Golden field guides to North American birds; and the Peterson Field Guide to Hawks. The field classes will require a small amount of hiking, so bring appropriate winter clothing, water, snack, etc.

To Register:

Call Steve at 303-494-2468, or email at stvjones@peakpeak.com.

For information on future classes, visit our website at www.bcna.org.



Good Spring and Summer for High Country Birds

By Dave Hallock

While many animals in the American West struggled to cope with drought and fire, our local high country birds numerically flourished. The Indian Peaks Spring and Breeding counts produced better than average numbers for total birds and species. Were the birds doing what many people did on weekends, that is head for the high country to stay cool? As I glean the 20 years of data covering past counts, there appears to be a pattern of dry and warm springs and summers producing good numbers of birds in the upper montane, subalpine and alpine habitats of western Boulder County.

The Spring Count, held during the first two weeks of May, produced final numbers of 92 species (historic average of 83) and 44 birds seen per count hour (historic average of 36). Two trends are appearing during the spring with this year's count being no different. The first is that many of our migrants seem to be arriving during early May in greater number. This is especially true for the "short-distance migrants," those birds that primarily winter in the Southwest and Mexico. This was most evident this spring for what I will call the "big three" short-distance migrants: broad-tailed hummingbird, ruby-crowned kinglet and yellow-rumped warbler. A second spring count trend is the early arrival of some neotropical migrants. Early finds this year included western woodpecker, dusky flycatcher, cliff swallow, MacGillivray's warbler, and yellow warbler. Other good finds on the count included pied-billed grebe, eared grebe, American white pelican, white-faced ibis, northern pygmy-owl, and blue jay.

The breeding count proved to be even better. The number of individuals (53 per count hour) is just under the record. The number of species (107) is 5th highest (the record is 112). Both montane and subalpine/alpine count areas had significant numerical increases, with increasers leading decliners by three to one. Throughout

the count circle ruby-crowned kinglets were almost double their average number; the same was true for broad-tailed hummingbirds in the montane and white-crowned sparrows in the subalpine. There appeared to be signs of an upward elevational shift, possibly related to the heat and drought. This seemed most pronounced with such species as Hammond's flycatcher, cliff swallow and yellow warbler in the montane, and black-capped chickadee, rock wren and chipping sparrow in the subalpine. There were some oddities, especially in the krummholz at treeline, including lazuli bunting, MacGillivray's warbler and green-tailed towhee. It is probable that many of these sightings are of post-breeding or non-breeding birds. And the Brewer's sparrows were back. Since 1994 they have been spotted on an occasional basis. Then last year we found them at four sites, three of which were in the krummholz. This year the number of sites increased to 10, 7 being in the krummholz. Of course, not all the news was good. There were some declining species and some of these appear to be chronic. Decliners included green-winged teal, olive-sided flycatcher, western tanager, brown-capped rosy-finch, and evening grosbeak.

A big thanks to all the participants: Linda Andes-Georges, Bev Baker, Barbara & Earl Bolton, Alex & Gillian Brown, Diane Brown, Andy Cowell, Marty Dick, Libby Ellis, Lee & Virginia Evans, Mike Figgs, Hector Galbraith, Beverly Gholson, Kathy Gibson, Maddy Goldhawk, Gregg Goodrich, Dave Hallock, Susan Harris, Elaine Hill, Jim Holitza, Jody Hovorka, Lynne Ihlstrom, Steve Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Dawn Kumli, Margy Lanham, Nan Lederer, Cherie Long, Gary Matthews, Lisa McCoy, Nate McCoy, Merle & Sally Miller, Paul Mintier, Naseem Munshi, Carol Newman-Holitza, Pam Piombino, Mark Pscheid, Bill Schmocker, Jan Stogsdill, Richard Trinkner, Michael Tupper, Tom VanZandt, and Eric Zorawowicz.

And a bit of humor . . .

When I was a teenager, I worked in the Department of Zoological Collections at the then Denver Museum of Natural History. Occasionally when answering the phone, the caller would describe a recently sighted bird, and it would be up to us to attempt an ID over the phone. I'll never forget the indignation of one caller, when she described seeing a "black bird with a yellow head." Naturally I said, "It's a Yellow-headed Blackbird." To which she said, "Don't be fresh with me, young man!" and promptly hung up. The perils...

— Jeffrey Offermann (submitted by his friend, Bill Kaempfer)





Wildlife Update

By Jim McKee

Lynx

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have been negotiating with the Department of Interior and US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the status of lynx to be released in Colorado in the future. Basically, Colorado state government agencies want lynx in Colorado to be managed by the CDOW in a manner essentially similar to the way the US Fish and Wildlife Service would if they were given an experimental, non-essential status. This would allow some incidental take and reduce restrictions on ranching and recreation. The Colorado Wildlife Commission has approved further releases by a 7 to 2 vote if such an agreement can be negotiated with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Denver.

The CDOW proposal which was approved would allow for the release of 50 lynx each spring in 2003, 2004, and 2005 with the further release of 10 to 12 lynx in each of the following 3 years. Right now the timing is critical for the 2003 release and the US Fish and Wildlife Service has shown no sense of urgency in working with DNR on the agreement.

As I have said before, I would much prefer a threatened status for the lynx released, but I don't believe that anymore will be released in Colorado as threatened. Further, I believe that incidental take will be minimal except for highway deaths since lynx seldom prey on lambs.

Mountain Lion Quotas

Since 1980, the number of lions killed in Colorado within one year has risen from 81 to 439 while the quotas have risen from 203 to 794 (for 2000) and 791 (for 2001). Even more licenses are issued, but "take" must be reported to the Division of Wildlife (DOW) within 48 hours. When the quota is reached in any Game Management Unit (GMU), lion hunting is stopped in that unit. Since quotas have increased so drastically, they are never reached in many GMUs. This year's quota is projected to be slightly (10-20) lower than that for 2001.

Depending on which estimate you believe, lion numbers in Colorado range anywhere from 1500 to 7500. I believe that the true population is likely to range between 2000 and 4000. In any case, lion estimates are no more than educated guesses. But quotas are based on these guesses with some pressure from the Colorado Department of Agriculture to increase "take" and (supposedly) reduce

livestock predation. Sinapu has taken a strong position that quotas should be reduced to no more than 300 per year until we can determine lion populations more accurately. The DOW lion biologist, himself, believes that quotas should be reduced by at least 250, but hasn't been able to sell this position thus far within the division. I'm supporting a reduction in quotas, but I don't pretend to know what the correct number is.

Interestingly enough, Dick Ray, an outfitter and lion hunter, agrees with Sinapu that the DOW must determine populations more accurately in order to set realistic quotas in the future. Other than habitat quality and estimated territory sizes, scent stations which trap hairs when visited can help with this process. Hairs taken from the trap can be genetically analyzed to determine the number of different lions that visited the scent station. It's still not exact, but with a good effort, the DOW could more accurately estimate lion populations and thus sustainable "take". Incidentally, current research supports "take" of no more than 11% of the population in any given year. This issue, if not resolved this year, will loom even larger next year.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

The Black-tailed Prairie Dog Work Group was finally formed in July and we have held three meetings so far. As in all such undertakings, things start slowly. As a matter of fact, we only now have a representative from the Prairie Dog Coalition and she wasn't able to attend the September meeting. No one from RMAD appeared to be acceptable to CDOW or DNR. After several false starts, Susan Miller was appointed to the group and now all or nearly all perspectives seem to be represented.

The aerial surveys have been completed but not all of the data has been compiled yet. It appears, however, that we have at least twice the prairie dog acres that were found in the EDAW survey, or more than 400,000 active acres.

Here is the goal statement the was adopted by the group.

Grassland Species Conservation Management Plan Goal Statement, August 26, 2002

"The goal of the plan is to ensure, at a minimum, the viability of the black-tailed prairie dog and associated species (such as the ferruginous hawk, burrowing owl, and mountain plover) and provide mechanisms to manage for populations beyond minimum levels, where possible, while addressing the interests/rights of private landowners."

The goal of the Eleven State Conservation Group for Colorado was 255,000 acres or 1 percent of the suitable habitat. We expect to manage to a much higher goal if we are to preserve other species as well as the prairie dog.



The Joys Of Zealous Listing

By Linda Andes-Georges

From an email exchange, late July 02:

Linda G to Steve J:

By the way, there are lots of blue grosbeaks along the Teller Farms trail. Do you know if Carol ever re-glimpsed the cuckoo (or RH woodpecker) at her place?

Steve to Linda:

They were just moving through. However, I saw a Reticulated Flyswatter along Boulder Creek just this morning!

Linda replies in haste:

I lack a Reticulated Flyswatter on my Boulder County list (already got it on the Lifest at Bosque del Apache, and the Colorado list at Latham Park). Could you tell me precisely where it was so that I can take 300 other birders over there tomorrow morning and scare the hell out of it? Thanks.

Steve zings back:

Absolutely. It was at the Foothills Highway median. The best vantage point is standing in the fast north-bound lane at rush hour.

Linda:

[ominous silence]

Summer Firefly Watching, And Appropriate Lightning Bug Music: July 4, 2002

By Linda Andes-Georges

A small number of BCNA friends plus a couple of brave new folks had a properly balanced meal (3 main dishes and 4 desserts) before donning their stylish mosquito netting outfits to watch lightning bugs in the Sawhill Ponds area on July 4th. In spite of apprehensions that the drought would discourage firefly numbers, there were many, and their beauty rivaled the sparkles of distant fireworks. There was much speculation about how this little Latin name population came to be here, so many miles west of the great numbers of humidity-loving fireflies in other places. Among our theories: they followed the railroads in the 19th century, liked it and stayed; they followed ditch corridors, rivers and streams; they are really fairies and therefore immortal.

The evening concluded with a superb rendition, by bass voices Glen and Jean-Pierre, of the Leader of the Firefly Corps (see lyrics below, by Glen). An encore performance with costumed chorus has been requested for the winter annual potluck. Y'all come.



[Sung to the tune of Gilbert and Sullivan's "I am the Captain of the Pinafore"]

I am the leader of the firefly hunt,
and a right good leader too;
I'm very, very good
and be it understood,
I'm glad to be out with you.
*Chorus: She's very, very good, and
be it understood, she's glad to be out
with you.*

I can skip along the track
while a-slapping at my back
in search of a lightning bug;
And it's only logical,
that I'm ecological
for I always give the gnats a hug.
Chorus: What always?
Yes, ALWAYS
Chorus: What ALWAYS?????
Well, ALMOST always
*Chorus: She ALMOST always gives
the gnats a hug,
so give three cheers and one cheer
more for our itchy keeper of the
skeeterbite score.
So give three cheers and one cheer
mor for the keeper of the bug bite
score.*

I'll count the flashes
while you scratch your rashes
and I'll raise your spirits too.
I haven't any qualms
'bout so many slapping palms
though you turn the night air blue.
*Chorus: She hasn't any qualms 'bout
so many slapping palms, though we
turn the night air blue.*

If you think it's hideous,
well you shouldn't be out with us, for
we thrive on "au naturel"
And though I get my lumps,
and a million itchy bumps,
I never, never say "Oh, HELL."
Chorus: What never?
No, NEVER.
Chorus: What NEVER?????
Well, HARDLY ever
*Chorus: So, give three cheers and
one cheer more for the well-bred
leader of the firefly corps.
So give three cheers and one cheer
more for the leader of the firefly
corps!*



Sinapu and Sierra Club want to remind you to

Be Bear Aware

Colorado's largest carnivore, black bears, are in trouble. Black bears are omnivorous, but largely rely on vegetation for sustenance. The drought has curtailed the abundance bears' favorites foods (grasses, acorns, and berries). Bears require sufficient food both in the spring and in the fall. Because of the lack of natural vegetation, it is likely that human-bear conflicts will increase, and that bears will travel further into urban areas.

Two-strike policy. If a bear comes into an urban area or breaks into a home, the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) will ear-tag and tattoo the bear's lip. If caught a second time, the CDOW is mandated to kill the bear. The best way to keep bears alive is to keep them out of trouble.

Homeowner defenses.

- Bears are equipped with an acute sense of smell.
- Do not leave garbage out overnight! Set out garbage the morning of collection. Freeze smelly garbage and regularly sanitize your cans with ammonia.
- Store garbage in a bear resistant trash container. Bear resistant containers are available at: McGuckin Hardware in Boulder; Western Container; Solid Waste Systems; May Manufacturing (dumpsters).
- Bears are maestros at breaking into houses (and cars). Wrap and store food in multiple layers, refrigerate, or freeze to stifle smells.
- Feed pets and store their food inside. Sanitize bar-b-que grills after their usage and store inside.
- Do not feed birds this year! Bears are acrobats and can easily climb trees to get to feeders. If you insist, however, bring feeders in at night, put them in the freezer, and sweep up all shell casings and seeds daily. Hummingbird feeders particularly attract bears.

Help keep bears alive and people safe!

Contact us:
Wendy Keefover-Ring
Director, Carnivore Protection Program, Sinapu
303-447-8655
wendy@sinapu.org

Billie Gutsell or Leland Rucker
Wildlife Committee, Sierra Club, Indian Peaks Group
303-494-6672
bgutsell@qwest.net



City Open Space and Mountain Parks report its 2002 raptor nesting totals to be the following:

- **Golden Eagles:** 3 youngsters successfully fledged
- **Peregrine Falcons:** 3 youngsters successfully fledged
- **Prairie Falcons:** 6 youngsters successfully fledged

If you would like to volunteer to monitor raptors (in addition, of course to volunteering your time to BCNA's Winter Raptor Monitoring program – see the calendar for organization meeting details), call Lisa Dierauf at 303-562-2014.



The Boulder Chapter of the Colorado Native Plant Society invites you to join us for a guest speaker, refreshments, book sales, and socializing, on the second Thursday of each month, October through April at 7:00 p.m. We will be meeting again at the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks offices, 66 South Cherryvale Road. For more information, contact Chapter President Kathy Damas at 303.543.1492.

Dates for this quarter:

October 10, 2002
November 14, 2002
December 12, 2002
January 9, 2003

Be sure to visit the Colorado Native Plant Society's website at www.conps.org for information on the speakers at these events and for the future.

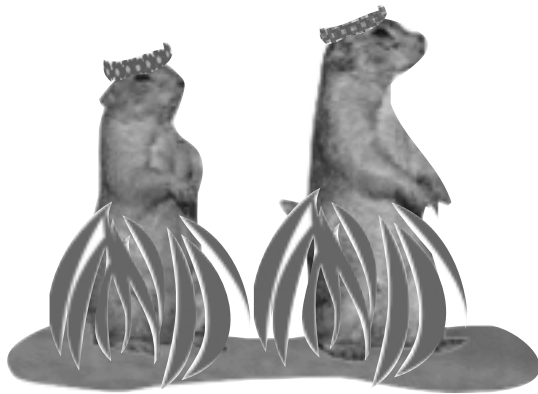


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Some animal art: exzooberance.com, comstock.com; Cover Guy Fawkes art: www.scrapalbum.com.

Support the Boulder County Nature Association

Name _____

Address _____

Phone, Fax or Email (optional) _____

Type of Membership:

- Student/Senior (65 and over) \$10
- General Member \$15
- Family or Household \$20
- Supporter \$30
- Subscriber \$50
- Founder \$100
- Life Member \$300

The membership year is January 1 to December 31.
(Members who join after October 1 are considered paid through the following year.)

All members receive this quarterly newsletter.

Please make checks payable to "Boulder County Nature Association" or "BCNA" and mail to:
P.O. Box 493
Boulder CO, 80306

Thanks for your support!



Boulder County Nature Association
P.O. Box 493
Boulder, CO 80306

