

Have you seen these birds?

Avian Monitoring Project Takes Off

On May 6 more than 40 volunteers gathered to plan fieldwork for the BCNA avian species of special concern nest site monitoring project. Volunteers will be stalking least bitterns at dawn at Sawhill Ponds, listening for ovenbirds in Panther Canyon, and hiking into the high country to glimpse black swifts darting through roaring waterfalls.



The study is aimed at improving knowledge of the status of birds designated as "rare and declining" or "rare" on the Boulder County Avian Species of Special Concern List. Nesting locations for many rare species are designated as "Critical Wildlife Habitat" in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan. These areas are protected from disturbance or prioritized for preservation as open space.

Everyone can help out with the effort. If you see any of the following species during the breeding season (roughly June-July), please send me a note or e-mail specifying species, location, habitat, and breeding behavior observed.

American Bittern, Least Bittern, Northern Harrier, Northern Bobwhite, Common Barn-Owl, Long-eared Owl, Burrowing Owl, Black Swift, Bank Swallow, Red-headed Woodpecker, Lewis's Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike, Veery, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Sage Thrasher, American Redstart, Hooded Warbler, Ovenbird, Lark Bunting.

To find out more about these birds, check out *Publications/Boulder County Avian Species of Special Concern* on our web site at www.bcna.org.

-- Steve Jones
stvjones@peakpeak.com

Inside . . .

Summer calendar

BCNA awards grants

Black-tailed prairie dog update

Come count prairie dogs

Furbearers again

Map shows loss of biodiversity

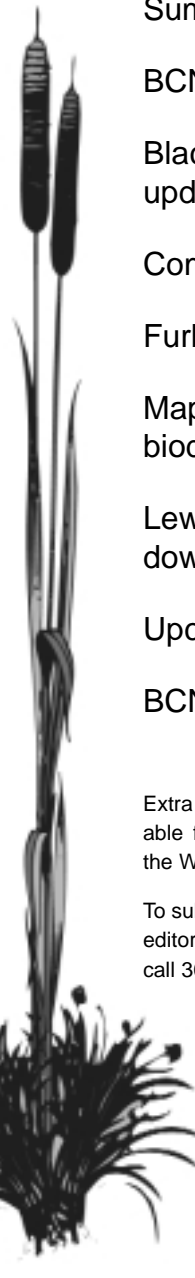
Lewis's woodpeckers at dowdy draw

Upcoming BCNA classes

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.





Sunday, July 15: 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, August 4: Steve Jones (303-494-2468) will lead a grassland interpretive hike on the South Boulder Creek and Big Bluestem trails. Meet at the South Boulder Creek Trail west trailhead (on the west side of SH 93 just north of South Boulder Creek) at 6 AM. Bring some finger food to share for a sunrise potluck breakfast. We will hike about four miles and return around 10 AM.

Sunday, August 12: Compilation gathering for avian nest site monitoring volunteers. Bring your notes and stories. Steve's place, 3543 Smuggler Way, Boulder (take Greenbrier west from South Broadway; turn right on Smuggler Way six blocks after you pass Fairview High School), 4-6 PM.

Saturdays, September 15-22: Indian Peaks fall bird count. Call Bill Kaempfer (303-939-8005) if you would like to join a team or pick up a new area.

Saturday, September 29: Visit the Ouzel Falls burn site with Joyce Gellhorn (303-442-8123). This year marks 22 years since the Ouzel Fire burned over 1000 acres in Rocky Mountain National Park. Joyce has studied this area ever since and will show how revegetation differs in various sites within the fire area. Meet at Foothills Nature Center at 8:30 AM to carpool to Wild Basin in Rocky Mountain National Park. Return around 4 PM.

Saturday, October 6: Join Steve Jones (303-494-2468) for a leisurely hike up the Green Mountain West Ridge trail. We might see migrating raptors, woodpeckers, bluebirds, and a few thousand ladybird beetles. Meet at Chautauqua Ranger Cottage parking area at 7 AM. Return around noon.

Sunday, October 7: Organizational meeting for wintering raptor survey. New volunteers are always welcome. Steve's place (see directions above), 3 PM.

In memory of . . .

Jan McKee, longtime BCNA member, died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease Saturday, January 6. Wife of BCNA member Jim McKee, Jan was active in the environmental community for many years, including volunteering for Boulder County Parks and Open Space, and participating in waterfowl and raptor monitoring. She was an accomplished musician and a tireless community volunteer. Jan is greatly missed by those who knew and loved her.

Jack Coss, an 18-year BCNA member, died in late May at age 63. Jack worked for NIST as a model builder for 25 years, but he will be best remembered by many for his work with cliff-nesting raptors. Jack and his wife Tressa spent countless hours monitoring golden eagle nests in St. Vrain, Lefthand, and Boulder Canyons, and he and Tressa were longtime participants in the Indian Peaks Bird Counts. We'll miss Jack's passion for nature, his self-deprecating wit, and those fantastic fresh trout barbecues on the back porch.

BCNA awards conservation and research grants

This year's BCNA conservation and research grants will support two projects whose goal is to study and reduce recreational impacts on Boulder County ecosystems.

The \$500 Peyton Holloway Hill Grant, sponsored by the Woods Foundation, will help fund an environmental restoration project at Heil Ranch. Project coordinator Ed Self and 100 volunteers will close and rehabilitate an old road at this county open space property. The road closure will protect Plumely Canyon, a 620-acre sensitive habitat area that is home to abundant wildlife, the globally rare big bluestem-little bluestem plant association, and two rare butterflies.

A \$500 BCNA research grant will support a study of the effects of recreational trail-use on the reproductive success of songbirds. William Merkle, of the University of Colorado EPOB Biology department, has been examining both nesting success and nesting behaviors of American robins and yellow warblers along a gradient of increasing recreational trail use. Initial results suggest that increasing recreational use affects both nesting success and nest-tending behavior of adult songbirds.

-- Steve Jones





Black-tailed prairie dog update

Landowner incentive meetings are continuing, including meetings with county commissioners in selected counties. Although there is still opposition in some areas, I believe that this effort is the most likely approach to preserving and enhancing species populations. As I noted in the last newsletter, there is \$600,000 in capital funding for the program which must be spent in the next three years. In support of this and similar efforts in other states, active lobbying efforts are taking place in Washington, D. C. directed toward funding from the 2002 farm program. Contract forms, habitat evaluation criteria, and question and answer sheets have been developed for the implementation of the program. Soil Conservation Boards, with (likely) technical assistance from the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory will actually implement the program in the chosen counties.



An additional work group has been established to determine the acreage targets for active prairie dog colonies in Colorado. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommended, at one time, a target of 1% of the suitable habitat in the eleven state

range. They have since backed away from this recommendation. If you remember from previous newsletters, the EDAW Study showed 214,000 occupied acres in the state. Aerial transect surveys will further refine acreage numbers by October first. One percent of suitable habitat would be approximately 270,000 acres. Then this number should be increased to allow for the effects of sylvatic plague on the occupied acres. More on this in the future. Wyoming actually has well over 1% of its habitat occupied. Other states, with more irrigated agriculture are in much worse shape than either Colorado or Wyoming.

On the plus side, legislation restricting re-location within counties was defeated in the legislature, as was most legislation which would have had an adverse effect on Colorado's wildlife. One example was the failure to fund the coyote control experiment that was intended to increase mule deer fawn survival.

And finally, the ban on recreational shooting of Black-tailed Prairie Dogs takes effect on September 1, 2001.

-- Jim McKee



Come count prairie dogs

Annual Prairie Dog count at Boulder Reservoir

Volunteer one day or every day to observe native wildlife and count prairie dog populations as part of the city of Boulder's wildlife management program.

3 Volunteer Sessions:

June 26, 27, and 28

July 24, 25, and 26

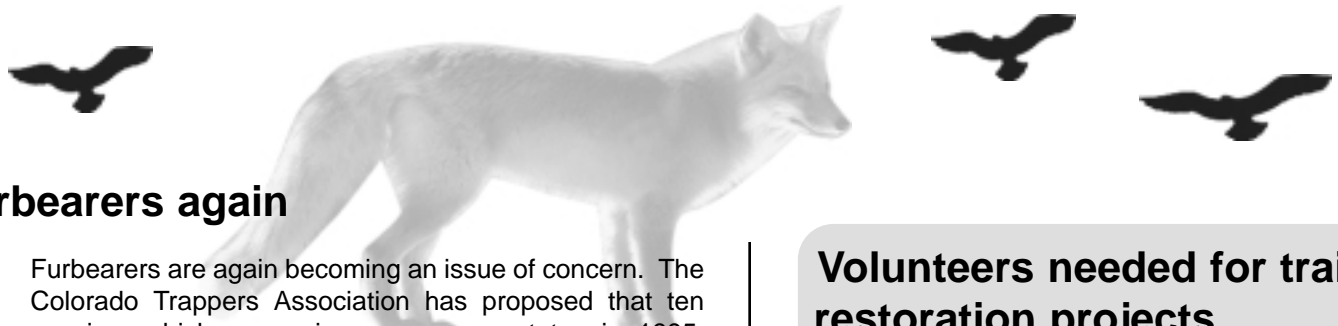
August 28, 29, and 30

We'll meet at the West Gate Entrance at 6 a.m. for instructions and refreshments

Experience with and possession of your own binoculars is required.

Please call Joy at (303) 413-7261 to sign up and receive further details.





Furbearers again

Furbearers are again becoming an issue of concern. The Colorado Trappers Association has proposed that ten species, which were given non-game status in 1995, revert back to game status so that they can live trap or call and shoot them. The species proposed for status change include: kit fox, swift fox, gray fox, pine marten, long-tailed and short tailed weasels, ring-tail, spotted and hog-nosed skunks, and opossum.

Approximately ten trappers testified in favor of this proposal at the Colorado Wildlife Commission meeting in May in Colorado Springs. Further testimony will be taken at the commission meeting on July 12 and 13 in Grand Junction. Initial Division of Wildlife staff testimony recommended against take of all of the above species except the weasels and the pine marten. However, their analysis seemed to consist, primarily, of reviewing trapping results in Wyoming and deciding that these species were continuing to do well there. Therefore, it was assumed that, since we have similar habitat, take in Colorado would cause no harm to these species. In my testimony, I suggested that, since these species cause no damage to agriculture in Colorado, population surveys should be performed to ensure that no damage will occur to any of these species for which take is allowed.

The trappers seem to feel that these species are a wasted resource for the state if no take is allowed. Since fur prices are very low at this time, the only reason I can see for them wanting to take these animals is for the pleasure of hunting or trapping them. Certainly they are not, generally, eaten. There are probably only 30 or 40 trappers statewide who would be involved in the take of these animals, so in fairness, it is probably hard to make a strong biological case against the take of the weasels and pine marten.

If any of you are interested, this would be a good time to write a letter to the Colorado Wildlife Commission or even to go to Grand Junction in July and testify in support of your position. I'll be there and you might find it an interesting experience. Letters may be addressed to the Colorado Wildlife Commission, c/o Human Dimensions Unit, Colorado Division of Wildlife, 6060 Broadway, Denver, CO 80216. You may also e-mail the commission at wildlife.comm@state.co.us.

-- Jim McKee

Volunteers needed for trail restoration projects

Give something back to the natural places you love so much! Come spend a day or a week-end in a beautiful location this summer, joining with friends to rehabilitate an area damaged by past ecological impacts.

There is no cost to attend. No experience is necessary. To register or get more information about any of the projects listed below, contact Ed Self at edself@qwest.net (preferred) or call 303-543-1411.

Willow Revegetation and Trail Work at Long Lake

Saturday, June 23, 7:30am - 4:00pm
Limited to 20 volunteers.

Revegetation at Diamond Lake

Friday eve., July 27 - Sunday aft., July 29
Limited to 20 volunteers.

Revegetation and Trail Work near Mitchell Lake

Saturday, August 4 - Sunday, August 5
Limited to 20 volunteers.

Road Closure and Revegetation at Heil Ranch

Saturday, September 8 - Sunday, September 9
Limited to 100 volunteers.

Sponsored through generous contributions by the Boulder Group of the Colorado Mountain Club and the Indian Peaks Wilderness Alliance.





Map looks at the loss of biodiversity in boulder county

The web site for the Boulder County Civic Forum presents a series of quality of life indicators for the county, one of which looks at extirpated and declining mammals and birds. The map was the product of Jeff Moline and Dave Hallock, resource planners with Boulder County Parks and Open Space and regular BCNA volunteers. They utilized a number of information sources to produce a composite map that visually portrays the number of species extirpated or declining in the major eco-regions of the county over the past 150 years.

The results should be no surprise. The prairie and riparian habitats of the eastern county have suffered the greatest alterations from agriculture and urban/suburban development. Habitat fragmentation combined with the loss of native grassland has resulted in 15 to 25 mammal or bird species gone or going. Most wide-ranging species have been lost, including grizzly bear, gray wolf, bison and pronghorn antelope. Elk have lost most of their historic prairie habitat.

Northern harriers, burrowing owls, and lark buntings, all of which were common 100 years ago, are

now found in only a handful of locations. Whether or not prairie dogs can continue to persist in such a fragmented landscape will be one indicator of our future ecological health.



The foothills and mountains have fared better than the plains, but have still seen their share of losses. Again, wide-ranging mammals, particularly those that conflicted with human values (grizzly bear, gray wolf) are gone. Bighorn sheep have seen their range reduced to a small area in the northwest corner of the county; their long-term well-being will be another indicator of how well we take care of this place. Foothill riparian areas have been highly impacted by roads and homes leading to declines of willow flycatchers and red-headed woodpeckers.

To view the map, go to the Boulder County Civic Forum at <http://www.bococivicforum.org/indicators/environment/31.html>.



Nederland library seeks natural history books

The newly created Nederland town library is badly in need of natural science books, particularly local guide books. They don't need to be the newest editions or in perfect condition. (Our entire collection is of donations.) I can pick up in town if that would help. Thanks,

Marty Dick, librarian
Martydick@aol.com; 303-444-0743



Check out this web site!

Greatplains.org offers descriptions of natural areas and Nature Conservancy properties throughout the prairie region.

So far, only Minnesota and North Dakota are up, but other states should follow. For example, for Minnesota they list 35 natural areas, with photos and descriptions of geology, flora, and fauna.





Lewis's woodpeckers at doudy draw

Submitted by David Waltman

I revisited the tree with a pair of Lewis's on Monday, May 14, and observed and took detailed notes for 40 minutes from 12:20 to 1:00 p.m. I found a nice viewing site across the canal to the south of their tree, and just remained quiet and still while I watched.



The two birds seemed to forget about my presence very quickly. I was treated to lots of aerial displays, flights circling their favorite tree and to and from other trees, flycatching, interesting calls and squeaks, and a brief mating attempt. One of the fun things was watching what I assume to be the male doing many deep head bobs while squeaking on a trunk a few feet away from the other bird.

There was some drumming, but not what I would regard as serious excavating (I didn't see any sawdust flying). The birds would move around in the area but always return to the same fork in the trunk. There are numerous openings in the big old tree, but I never saw a bird enter one. Also of note was the birds' reaction to people (runners and hikers) and dogs in the area. When these visiting creatures would approach, the birds would stop calling and climbing and flying, and go near the top of the tree and remain still and quiet. None of the visiting folks were aware of the woodpeckers.

Lewis's look so dark compared to the more flashy woodpeckers and other birds that I think non-birders easily overlook them. While I was there, the favorite tree was visited by a Bullock's Oriole pair, an American Kestrel pair, Blue Jay, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, and Black-billed Magpie. The woodpeckers and the other birds all seemed to ignore one another.

Editor's note: David Waltman is one of 45 volunteers working on the recently organized BCNA avian species of special concern nest site monitoring project. See related article on front page. -- SJ

upcoming bcna classes



Introduction to Nature Photography

Instructor: Lloyd Williams

Description: This class presents the basic tools and techniques of nature photography, including choice of equipment and film, techniques for getting the best exposure, and techniques for capturing scenics and wildlife.

Dates:

Tuesday, Aug. 7, 6:30-9:30 p.m., indoor class

Thursday, Aug. 9, 6:30-9:30 p.m., indoor class

Saturday, Aug. 11, field class (time TBA)

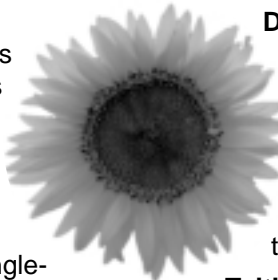
**Rain date: Saturday, Aug. 18

Tuition: \$70 (\$60 for BCNA members)

Limited to 12 students

Equipment: A camera and film. A 35mm single-lens reflex camera and sturdy tripod are strongly recommended.

To Register: Call Lloyd at (303) 449-1147, or e-mail at: BoulderLGW@aol.com



Fire Ecology

Instructors: Joyce Gellhorn and Steve Jones

Description: Front Range forests have been shaped by fire. Learn the differences among plants and wildlife communities within burned and unburned areas of the forest and at various elevations.

Dates:

Thursday, Sept. 6, 7-9 p.m. indoor class

Saturday, Sept. 8, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m., field class

at Shanahan Ridge

Saturday, Sept. 22, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m., field class
at Walker Ranch

**Saturday, Sept. 29 and Oct. 6: Optional field trips
to Wild Basin and Green Mountain West Ridge.

Tuition: \$70 (\$60 for BCNA members)

Limited to 15 participants

To Register: Call Steve at (303) 494-2468, or e-mail at: stvjones@peakpeak.com.



2001 BCNA Board of Directors

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Secretary Bev Gholson 303-440-5225

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Steve Jones 303-494-2468
Naseem Munshi 303-673-0933
Joan Ray 303-444-5011
Jacob Smith 303-247-0998



BCNA Online

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

For the calendar, class offering, research results, publications and other BCNA related information

www.bcna.org

JOIN THE NATURE-NET LIST SERVICE

For the latest news and in-depth discussions on issues of interest to BCNA members

For more information, go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nature-net>

CONTACT BCNA

Email BCNA at mail@bcna.org

Questions?

Contact Randy Gietzen at randyg@boulder.net

Committees & Contacts

Allegra Collister Nature Preserve and Birdbanding Site	Joe Harrison	303-772-3481
Cliff Nesting Raptors	Nan Lederer	303-447-1899
Education Committee	Naseem Munshi	303-673-0933
Indian Peaks Bird Counts	Dave Hallock	303-258-3672
	Bill Kaempfer	303-939-8005
National Forest Management	Tim Hogan	303-444-5577
Newsletter	Steve Jones	303-494-2468
	Jim McKee	303-494-3393
	Susan Winter	303-581-0783
Open Space Liaisons	Scott Severs	303-442-1322
	Jacob Smith	303-247-0998
Parties, Special Events	Naseem Munshi	303-673-0933
State and Regional Wildlife Issues	Jim McKee	303-494-3393
Winter Raptor Survey	Holly Devaul	303-415-0464

Artwork Credits, Acknowledgements, Etc.

Page 1: Burrowing Owl - Steve Jones; Page 3: Prairie Dog without artillery - Steve Jones; Page 4: Fox - photoartofnature.com; Page 5: Sheep - freepalace.com; Page 6: Lewis's Woodpecker - Steve Jones.

Support the Boulder County Nature Association

Name _____

Address _____

Phone, Fax or Email (optional) _____

Type of Membership:

<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior (65 and over)	\$10
<input type="checkbox"/> General Member	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> Family or Household	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/> Subscriber	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Founder	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member	\$300
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder	\$1000

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.

Supporter-level members (and higher) also receive a complimentary copy of each BCNA publication that is published during the membership year.

Please make checks payable to "Boulder County Nature Association" or "BCNA" and mail to:

P.O. Box 493

Boulder CO, 80306



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