

New and Old Nesting in Boulder County

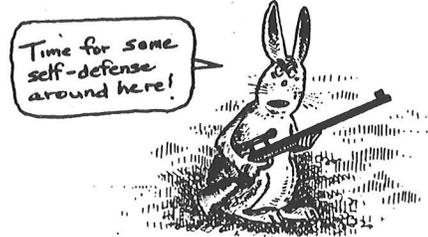
...by LVAG from information supplied by many sources

It has been an unusual year for nestwatchers. Among the oddities was the first-ever attempt by osprey to nest in the County. Like many newer arrivals here who have difficulty locating an affordable decent place to live, the ospreys may not have made a wonderful choice for their first try. They worked hard, and incubated for 35 days at the Boulder Reservoir, in full view of the indifferent fisherfolk at the west end, but the nest failed. However since this is not uncommon, for first tries, we may see this couple again next year.

Other nesting news includes this item: orchard orioles nested at White Rocks. This is the most western point of their slow dispersal toward the Rockies. They have been preceded, of course, by pioneer eastern birds like the Eastern bluejay. The latter arrived without covered wagons, but are obnoxiously pushing the natives around in time-honored tradition. Perhaps cardinals will be the next wave of immigration.

Latest news of the County's golden eagle population is mixed, but on the whole quite good. In the S. St. Vrain, the nest failed—the fledgling died when small. In Boulder Canyon it is believed that fledging took place. In Lyons, there has been one young, soon to fledge. Skunk Canyon has one fledged chick. Lefthand Palisades, a centuries-old site, had one young, and fledging is probable at this point. On Rabbit Mountain, one young is fledged and often establishes himself in the shade in order to receive in comfort all due parental attentions.

(cont. on page 8)



CEC Wildlife Issues Update

...by Jim McKee

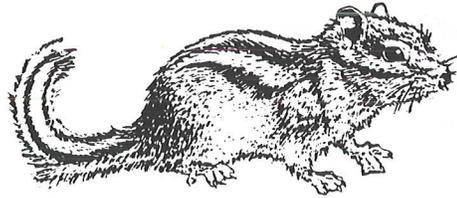
We now have resolution of the three legislative bills concerning Colorado Wildlife. SB-96 144, which would have transferred the authority for handling wildlife damage claims from CDOW to the state Dept. of Agriculture was tabled and never returned for consideration. SB-96 167 (see our Spring issue) was signed by the governor and became law. HB-96 1027, which, among other things, would have prohibited CDOW from adopting closed seasons on coyotes and raccoons, was vetoed by the governor.

Several environmental groups, including representatives from the state chapters of Audubon and the Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, Sinapu, and BCNA, met with Governor Romer and expressed outrage about his signing SB-96 167 which transferred sole authority to regulate depredating animals to the state Dept. of Agriculture. The governor seemed quite surprised at this reaction. Possibly as a result of this as well as other factors, he directed Agriculture Commissioner Kourlis to establish a "Predator Roundtable," with representatives of various stakeholder groups. The environmental groups, largely state organizations, did not include BCNA.

Upon returning from a trip to California to see my oldest son married, I found that I had been appointed to the roundtable as one of the governor's three appointments. (This was largely because Sierra Club and Audubon had complained about a lack of balance in roundtable appointments.) Although I had missed the first meeting in Meeker, I have attended all subsequent meetings.

(continued on page 8)

BCNA CALENDAR - SUMMER TO FALL



The Green Network

Do you have Internet access? BCNA is attempting to link as many of us as possible in order to facilitate rapid communication. This could be useful for special announcements ("Wine tasting at Linda's place!" or, "Prairie dog photo party this weekend!"). It could also be useful for pressuring local politicians and staffpersons when their intervention can benefit butterflies, birds, bees, and other beasts.

Note that e-mail wastes no paper, not even the post-consumer recycled kind.

Please e-mail your address, if you have one, to Randy Gietzen: randyg@csn.net

- Sun. July 21**
5:30-9:00

 - **BCNA Board Meeting** (open to all) at home of Steve Jones: potluck at 6:00; meeting after, at around 6:45. If planning to attend, please confirm with **Scott Severs, 442-1322**.

- Sat. July 27**
6-9:00 pm

 - **Annual Anne White Trail Hike**: a twilight hike with Steve Jones and Mary Rose to observe birds and wildflowers (thrush calls and the sweet perfume of monarda are guaranteed), and to celebrate lives well spent. Bring a brown bag supper and meet at the Boulder Friends Meeting House, 1850 Upland, at 6:00. **Contact: Steve Jones, 494-2468**.

- Sun. Aug. 18**
7-9:30 pm

 - **Screech Owl Conference and Party**: (great horned, long-eared, burrowing, boreal and barn owls also welcome) Transectors, friends of transectors, and all persons curious to see what the fuss is about (see "Go Bump," page 5) are invited to confer and plan at 7:00 around a dessert-and-drink potluck; try to call an owl around 8:15. **Contact: Steve Jones, 494-2468**.

- Date to be determined**

 - **BCNA Board Meeting**: call **Scott Severs, 541-0784**, for time and place. All members welcome.

- Sat. Sept. 8-
Sun. 15**

 - **Indian Peaks Fall Bird Count**. Now in its 15th year of compiling data for research databanks. Individuals and teams hike or ski into the 25 Wilderness sectors and literally count members of each species seen. No expertise required of participants, but good eyes, ears and binoculars help. **Call Linda (543-0404), Bev (530-9334) or Dave (258-3672)** to join a group.

- Sat. Sept. 15**
3:00 (4:00)- ?

 - **Annual Greenman Equinox and Moonlight Madness Hike and Gourmet Supper at Altitude** (in recent years, was held on Mt. Audubon): meet at 3:00 at Settler's Park, or at 4:00 at Rainbow Lakes Campground for sunset hike up Caribou Mountain (2.5 to 3 miles), gourmet potluck supper *en haut*, and return by moonlight. **Contact Naseem, 673-0933 or Steve, 494-2468** if you have questions.

1996 BCNA Board

President: Scott Severs (442-1322)
V.P.: Steve Jones (494-2468)
Treasurer: Chaya Nanavati (772-3659)
Secretary: Marty Dick (444-0743)
Members-at-large:
Tom Delaney (581-2478)
Bev Johnson (938-8483)
Cherie Long (447-0922)
Jim McKee (494-3393)
Kristine Crandall (444-1955)
Holly Devaul (786-0479)

Committee Representatives

Prairie dogs - Randy Gietzen (530-4355)
Ind. Peaks Bird Count - Dave Hallock (258-3672)
Bldr. Cnty Land Trust - Joe Mantione (417-0948)
Field Trips - Steve Jones (494-2468)
Col. Envir. Coalition - Jim McKee (494-3393)
Trails; Partners in flight - Scott Severs (442-1322)
Newsletter - Linda Andes-Georges (543-9404)



THE RAPTOR'S EYE:

Mini- and maxi-reports about ongoing local issues



Greenways Trails Options in Centennial and Bobolink Areas

....by Scott Severs

The proposed transportation trail linkage through Open Space connecting the Centennial Trail to the East Boulder Recreation Center continues to be discussed between many departments and boards of the City of Boulder. City Council will base its decision on recommendations from city boards, staff, and the public.

Staff from the Transportation Department Greenways Program and from Open Space reached consensus on an eastern alignment for this trail south of Baseline Road. This route was the least environmentally damaging according to data that Open Space had collected on all the proposed routes.

Staff took the eastern alignment before the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and to the Open Space Board of Trustees. TAB unanimously approved the alignment, the Parks Board was split on the issue, and the Board of Trustees voted to recommend to Council to not approve any of the alignments through Open Space.

The BCNA Board also took a position that our organization could not support any new construction of a trail of this type on Open Space. Either of the two alignments would severely impact the environmental and aesthetic qualities that make these areas special (several declining species occur in these area, including bobolinks and the *spiranthes* orchid). We believe that the on-street alternatives have not been fully explored and these would be preferable to scarring wetlands and meadows with cement roads. Several BCNA members spoke eloquently, along with other environmental groups, to the Board of Trustees, and the Trustees memo to Council reflected many of BCNA's opinions regarding this issue.

This matter looms large in the future uses of Open Space, since a precedent established here could lead to further use of Open Space properties as venues for hard surface bicycle and rollerblade paths. This Greenways path could be one of many proposed for areas that have greater value to native plants and animals than to humans. The Greenways Program Staff

lacks the critical environmental knowledge for trail design on Open Space, a fact that they have publicly acknowledged. As a general matter of principal, Open Space staff should be in charge of trail development on their properties, rather than Transportation.

Copies of the excellent recommendations by the Open Space Board of Trustees to City Council, as well as of the BCNA Board perspective on this topic, can be requested from Scott Severs at 541-0784 (e-mail Rostrhamus@aol.com).

Rocky Mountain National Park Commercial Overflight

....by Scott Severs

As ridiculous as it may seem, RMNP may be the next park destined for commercial tour overflights by low flying helicopters and planes. This would severely impact the qualities that we love about the park: the wildlife, the wilderness, and the solitude. Grand Canyon National Park swarms with gnat-like aircraft, disrupting any chance for quiet and causing a "brown cloud" type atmosphere over that park.

A crash of one of these planes would really be disastrous in RMNP, forcing rescuers to scramble through wildlife habitat to reach a crash site.

The Federal Aviation Administration is looking at three proposals for RMNP; only one would ban such flights outright.

Staff of the park need the help of concerned individuals to help bring about a ban on these flights. Comments (in triplicate) need to be made by August 7th to:

FAA Office Chief Council
Rules Docket (AGC- 200); Docket No. 28577;
800 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20591.

Or you may e-mail your comments to:
nprmcmts@mail.hq.faa.gov

Copies of comments would be appreciated by the park, send them to: Superintendent, Rocky Mountain National Park; Estes Park, CO 80517.

Transportation Secretary Federico Pena will make a final decision after the August 7th deadline.

POT POURRI AND POT FRAIS

Environmental, ecological, and culinary odds and ends

The Sentinels of Morrison

....by LVAG

In early spring, the hogback ridges west of Denver are an anthill of activity as official and unofficial observers gather to admire the multitudes of migrating birds of prey. A sample of overheard exclamations (dialogue to translate):

“Bird coming in, low along the mesas.”
“...to the right of the Needle, below the contrail!”
“...near Two Pines, below the horizon.”
“...coming in fast, mobbing the owl. It’s a Coop!”
“...OK, it’s over the Space House, half a glass...”
“...coming up over Cabrini, rocking hard. It’s a TV.”
“...two birds, three fields up to the right of the Volcano!”
“...It’s a crow... a raven... well, it’s a corvid.”
“...dropping fast below the Microwave; it’s a Sharpie!”
“... can’t be a TV - I don’t know - it’s a dot with a tail!”
“...look at those axillaries: wonderful! it’s a Prairie!”
“...two of ‘em - spiraling - now heading north fast. Ospreys.”
“...What’s the white UFO? Funny flight... (pause)...
It’s a plastic bag!”
“Where have you been? While you were gone you missed a goshawk, a snowy owl, and a sandhill crane.”
“Yeah, right, and a partridge in a pear tree!”



Did you say this was your thicket?

We once landed just to picnic in the MacNeil Pass and hastily postponed lunch when we found fresh bear tracks that measured 18 inches. There was a friend who encountered another huge grizzly above Gibraltar Lake, and when the bear stood and towered above the alder thicket, the fisherman bolted and ran.

“But it’s the worst thing you can do!”

“My head kept telling me that,” my friend grinned sheepishly. “But my legs just wouldn’t listen!”
*‘In the World of 10,000 Smokes,’ by Ernest Schweibert
Hemispheres April 1996*

Najma Munshi’s Pigeon Peas

Published by popular request:

dry pigeon peas (soak overnight and precook)
coconut cream (available at supermarket in jar)
a little chopped onion
a little chopped green chilies
pinch salt, pinch tumeric, lemon juice to taste

“Exact amounts are not important—spice it up to taste. Simmer together for as long as possible.” [Note: wonderful smoky flavor of this dish at Naseem’s party was because the men, trying to be helpful, turned the heat on high and the peas were slightly burned.]

The Land of Make-Believe

Cowboy boots, like big hats and four-wheel-drive trucks, prove an important truth about human beings. When fact and common sense defy make-believe, only a sucker would be against make-believe.

In 1878, John Wesley Powell issued his famous *Report on the Lands of the Arid Regions of the U.S.* Powell had learned about those lands first hand, especially the high, dry Colorado Plateau.... The fact he reported is that the West is short of water, but that fact smashed against the hard wall of wishful thinking.

[His] report recommended some common sense to Congress. Cluster settlements and plowed land along the rivers. Allocate the rest in large blocks sixteen times as large as the Homestead Act allowed. Instead of dividing the land into artificial grids, let watershed’s determine boundaries. Congress did not listen. It preferred the boosters’ claims that water would flow when the land was settled.

From “Perspective” by Jon Roush in the Winter 1995 edition of Wilderness

Short Bird Quiz

Name the bird described (answers on page 8)

1. an outfielder
2. where gardeners plant extra seeds
3. what thieves are doin’
4. a coward from the great plains
5. a regal angler

....author unknown, submitted by Eunice Lovejoy

POT POURRI AND POT FRAIS, cont.

Environmental, ecological, and culinary odds and ends

Things that go Bump in the Night

...by Virginia Dionigi

Things that bump in the night were Joe Harrison and myself as we stumbled, fumbled and clawed our way along the banks of the St Vrain River on the night patrol for the Screech Owl Survey.

Over fences, under fences, over bridges, under bridges, trudging through snow, crunching on dry leaves, crossing over the river on ice or crossing on slippery rocks and up the mucky banks to fight through tangled brush, stepping over fallen logs, ducking under low-hanging branches ("What do you mean, to get from here to there we have to walk on THAT narrow icy top ledge of the head gate for the irrigation ditch!")

Oh my-- I will have to do it if I want to keep my reputation of a hard-core birder, and I tell you it does not get much more hard-core than this..

Joe and I had signed up to survey a stretch of about ten miles of the St. Vrain River, little knowing that someone would get the bright idea that in order to have an accurate account of the Screech Owls of Boulder County you really have to walk each section four times. Four times ten equals forty. Forty Miles in the dark! Holy cow in forty miles you can buy an easy walk clear to Denver.

Since Joe is only available on weekend nights we decided to do a two-car shuttle system and try to walk at least three hours each time. On frigid nights we had so many layers of clothing on it was nigh on impossible to heist a leg over the treachous barbed fences, and even harder to crawl under them. Clear moonless evenings were the most difficult to walk as we very seldom used the flashlight for fear of spooking our quarry. After a couple of near slips I got smart and carried a walking stick (I could just see us trying to call 911 on the cellular we packed and give them directions to come to our rescue).

I also learned to let Joe take the lead so he was the one who got zapped with those low invisible hanging limbs. But I should make it clear, if we had ever had a red-eyed snorting bull in hot pursuit of us I would have broken all speed records in taking the lead.

As it turned out the walks were most pleasant on the river bottom with the night creatures. Puzzled horses or cows (no bulls) would stop their grazing to watch these two fools go

tromping through their pasture in the dark. You could hear the geese and ducks chattering on the gravel pit ponds. A loud slap on the water meant we had startled a beaver and a duller splash was the muskrat. Now and then a cute bunny rabbit would appear, little suspecting it would make a nice midnight snack for a Great Horned Owl. Twice, unaware that we were nearby, a pack of coyotes shattered the silence with their melancholy howl, and I am sure we would have been disowned by everyone including our dogs if we had met up with any of the skunks we kept smelling.

Speaking of dogs, no matter how quiet we tried to be, we always managed to set off some mangy farm dog to barking and would not been surprised if its owner had stepped out on the back porch and let go with a blast from a shotgun.

The number sighted of Great Horned Owls was a disappointment but the Screeches made up for it. What could be better than to be out on a crisp-cool night under a star-studded sky and see a silhouette of this remarkable little owl and hear its lonely shivery soft call? The Screech Owl is the smallest of our eared owl and has been called "a feathered wildcat" because of its prowess as a hunter. It will prey upon almost anything that does not eat it first. The majority of our owls were found in a habitat of big trees and dense brush undergrowth. One night we were lucky enough to find nine Screeches in one section with favorable cover. About one-half of the owls answered our tape with their whinny call and the others with the "bouncing pingpong ball" serenade. Some were silent but would fly close enough for us to catch a shadowry glimpse of them.

At one location we had three together flying from limb to limb overhead not making a sound but curious to find out who was invading their territory. Another time a Screech was calling and calling, but the call sounded different; it had a gurgle or stutter to it. Never able to sight the little fellow, we were perplexed until next time out when we heard another such call. After much searching we concluded the owl was deep inside a hollowed branch and the sound was vibrating off the interior of the wall, thus causing the stuttering effect.

We did not want to disturb the owls anymore than necessary and would quickly move on as soon as we had checked one out. After all this was their homeground, and their mating or feeding hours. It was wonderful to be a part of their world for a brief time.

We sighted or heard a total of more than thirty Screech Owls, and believe there are at least fourteen or fifteen individuals. They were found clustered in little over one-half of our survey territory as the remaining area did not seem to have enough brushy undergrowth (because of over-grazing) to attract the owls.

(Pot Pourri and Pot Frais, cont.)

A Really Ducky Trip

or, Craning our Necks as the Sand Blows to the Hills

....by Susan Harris

On March 22nd through 24th, I traveled with a congenial group of BCNA members and county volunteer naturalists to the San Luis Valley to see the spring crane migration. Our first viewing spot was the San Luis Lakes State Park. As we pulled into the parking lot, there it was, our first crane: 75 feet tall, gray-green coloration, sitting perfectly still, allowing views from every angle.

Fortunately, although we saw no more cranes that day, *Grus constructionus* wasn't the only species we saw on the trip. The lake provided great views of waterfowl, as well as of midge abdomens as we attempted to verify that all those little flying things weren't mosquitoes.

Our next stop was Great Sand Dunes Natl. Monument, where we battled the wind, crossed the dry river bed, and made it all the way to the bottom of the first dune. The constant formation and re-formation of the sand dunes is always fascinating.



YWAR '119 Keeps the Faith

....by Joe Harrison

May is past and it is late in the season now. YWAR '119 has *always* returned during the month of May. Where is our friend, the yellow warbler whom we had seen each year at the birdbanding station, for five years? Hope was dimming.

On Sunday, June 2nd, Virginia, Tony and I decided to try our luck at banding in the afternoon. Probably 99% of our banding effort has been during morning hours—we needed a change of pace, and also wanted to put in a little extra time. Spring '96 has been comparatively slow with not nearly as many birds as in the same season '95. Too dry? Maybe so.

All nets were opened by approximately 5 p.m. It was unexpectedly busy for the first two hours. At 7:10, we headed out for another net check. Most were empty or had only one bird. By the time we reached the westernmost net (#1) we were talking about closing the nets and going home.

But #1 had three birds in it. And one of them was a yellow warbler. Virginia approached the net, she could see a band on the right leg. Could it be...? As she carefully removed the bird, she could also see that this was an old band. With the bird free of the net, now... Hurry! Read the band! YES! It is '119! He has come back at last. He is healthy and dressed in his finest breeding plumage. He is at least 6 years old now. A brief examination and a thankful release. Please come back in 1997!

Note in addendum: We were surprised to learn, when reading the latest issue of *North American Bird Bander*, that a yellow warbler banded at Troy, Montana on Aug. 18, 1986 was recovered there again on Aug. 10, 1995. A new longevity record: **9 years**. Our '119 has a ways to go (may he live long and prosper!) For a retrospective look at birdbanding at the Allegra Collister Nature Area where Joe, Virginia Dionigi and Tony Esposito are chief banders, see next page.

On the next day, we visited the Monte Vista Wildlife Refuge, where we had our first sightings of sandhill cranes. We watched one flock of about 1500 in the air, and found many smaller flocks in fields. Their cries ("garooo-a-a-a" or "gar-oo-oo-oo" depending on the field guide consulted) resounded in the air.

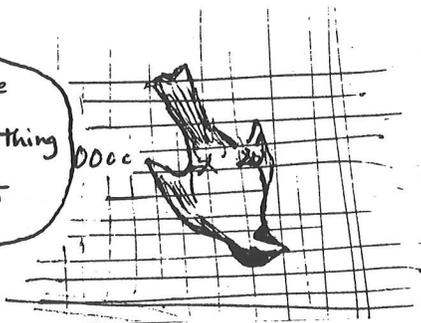
The wetlands also hosted a wide variety of other waterfowl, including large numbers of pintails, wigeons, coots, gadwalls, Canada geese, etc., all with the morning light highlighting their features. A great view of the blue bill of a ruddy duck delighted at least one member of our group; others enjoyed watching several strutting ring-necked pheasants.

From Monte Vista we went to Alamosa Natl. Wildlife Refuge. By this time, the wind had picked up, so views were obscured by suspended dust and moisture from the approaching storm. But we took a long walk along the river anyway, sighting a few more birds and some animal tracks.

On Sunday, the predicted blizzard having passed us by, we returned there for clearer views, and from a bluff overlooking the river and wetlands, we enjoyed watching several northern harriers and a great view of an immature golden eagle.

(Pot Pourri and Pot Fraiss, cont.)

So I go, like
"yeah," like,
there's something
really, like,
familiar about
this place!



Believe it or Not Facts from local Birdbanding

....collected by Joe Harrison

In the preceding year, 595 hours (not including maintenance, reporting, or other duties) were expended so that 757 birds could be banded. This equates to 47 minutes of effort per bird.

Of the 94 different species captured and banded at the Allegra Collister Nature Area, only 40 species have had a banded representative return and be recaptured here.

33.94% of all birds banded were of 4 species: Wilson's warbler (10.99%), American robin (8.4%), orange-crowned warbler (7.4%), and Gambel's white-crowned sparrow (7.15%).

Nineteen species are represented by only a single captured bird: Cooper's hawk, broad-winged hawk, American kestrel, yellow-billed cuckoo, red-naped sapsucker, hairy woodpecker, olive-sided flycatcher, gray flycatcher, red-breasted nuthatch, white-breasted nuthatch, hermit thrush, solitary vireo, black-throated blue warbler, black and white warbler, American redstart, ovenbird, rose-breasted grosbeak, field sparrow, and fox sparrow.

Both the kestrel and the broad-winged hawk were captured because of other birds already in the net. The kestrel thought a Lincoln's sparrow looked like a choice morsel, and the hawk was enticed by a white-crowned sparrow. Of course, both became entangled in the net next to their intended victims.

Black-capped chickadees are a resident species at ACNA. "BCCH" 1630-90886 was captured twelve times from 1991 through 1993 and is the current record-holder for most captures.

BCCH 1920-46031 was captured 9 times—all in the fall of 1992!

Most recently, in the Spring of 1996, a total of 446 individual birds of 54 different species were banded and released. Fourteen birds banded in previous years were also recaptured (including '119, whose amazing story of longevity and faithfulness was recorded in our last issue; see new article page). Three new species were banded: savannah sparrow, rock wren, and common grackle. Also, two new species were added to the sighting list: red-headed woodpecker, and dickcissel. Lazuli bunting was the prevalent species: 57 were banded.

All of the banders, interns and helpers at ACNA are volunteers who devote countless hours to their love of birds and to this worthwhile scientific endeavor. Birdbanding is truly a measure of much more than just avian populations and status.

Creature Feature: the Sleeping Beauty

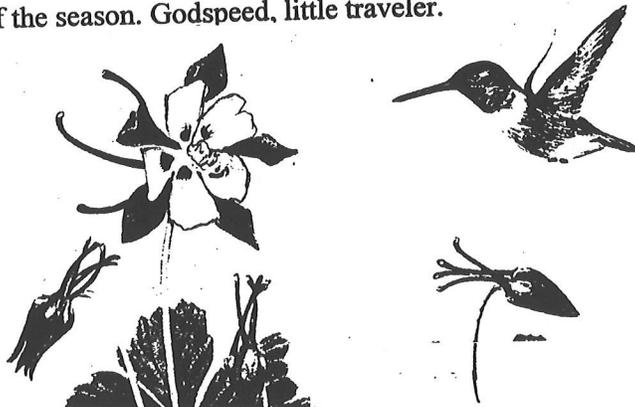
....by LVAG

May 4, 1996. It was, I insist, unintentional, innocent. I was hiking very early, eager to sample the spring morning before meandering dog-walkers and snorting runners filled the trails.

Pausing to catch my breath, I scanned my surroundings with binoculars, and—completely by chance—noticed the lady in her boudoir, still asleep: petite and delicate, she was wearing an irresistibly iridescent green top. I froze in admiration.

She opened her eyes and looked around her, dazed. A prisoner of my indiscretion, I continued to watch, enchanted.

She sat a moment as if uncertain where she was, then shook her feathers with a sudden determination and flew away as straight and quick as an arrow. My eyes could not follow her flight, but I heard the faint whir of her wings as she left. She was "my" first hummingbird of the season. Godspeed, little traveler.



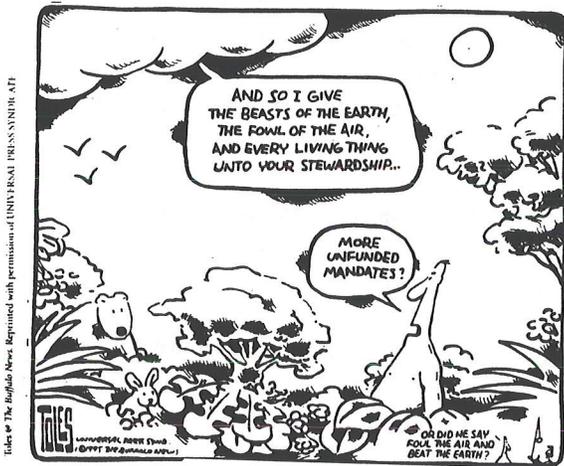
(Wildlife Issues, continued from page 1)

Environmental groups have expressed a great deal of concern regarding the roundtable process. In particular, are we just going through the motions to achieve an already predetermined result? I may be naive, but I believe that by taking part in this process, we will achieve some compromises that will be better for Colorado wildlife than if we do not participate.

My sole criteria for continuing in the process is, "will Colorado wildlife be better off if I stay or if I withdraw?" I intend to continue to the bitter end.

For those of you who are supporting the PAWW amendment, over 70,000 signatures have been collected as of early July. Petitions must be in to the Secretary of State by around the middle of July.

Hopes are high for seeing this initiative on the ballot—if you have signed, continue to explain to the uninformed that this proposal would not affect firearm hunting, fishing, or cage traps or nets for legitimate study, or indeed even necessary predator control by ranchers. Small rodent control would be unaffected. The initiative would require more proof of need to prevent indiscriminate trapping and poisoning.



Oiseaux mysteries (reponses)

Answers from page 4

1. flycatcher
2. sparrow ("spare row")
3. robin
4. prairie chicken
5. kingfisher

(Nesting in Boulder County, cont. from page 1)

Peregrine falcons have had a banner year so far, in fact, now the prairie falcons, their rivals for good nest sites, are suffering from the competition. There have been several pairs of both types in the Mouse Ears area of Open Space, but on at least one Mountain Park rock, the prairie nest failed, perhaps because of the proximity of peregrines. Prairies exhibited an interest in Dinosaur Mountain, but in the end, there was "no sale." In all, about five local pairs of falcons are fledging at present.

Fishing on the Kulik

Alaskan brown bears are "much bigger than fully grown black bears. There is wisdom in surrendering the water when these shaggy, 1000-pound anglers arrive, since fishing rods make poor weapons and firearms are illegal on both rivers. These giant beasts do not run from people. I know a bush pilot who enjoys our daily confrontations and believes it is important for city fisherfolk to be reminded, from time to time, that people are still in the food chain.

'We sort of like it when they get somebody.' He rolls his bloodshot eyes comically. 'Restores our faith in wild things.'

*'In the World of 10,000 Smokes,' by Ernest Schwiebert
Hemispheres, April 1996*

Outrageous Quotes

....collected by LVAG

In discussion of idea of setting up a "Doggie Hotline" comparable to the cyclists "Close-call Hotline," with the purpose of collecting data on people-or-wildlife harassment by canines, we overheard:

"I'm very skeptical about calling Mountain Parks to complain about dogs."

"Yes, it's like calling Open Space and complaining about cows!"

BCNA President Scott Severs, trying to get a consensus on planning the next Board meeting: "So do we want to potluck, or just do what we just did: bring beer and sugar?"

Raptor Rhapsody

....by Joe Harrison

Do you feel a special excitement about raptors? Are you thrilled at the spectacle of migration? If you've answered "yes" to both questions, then Veracruz, Mexico in early October is a *must visit* location.

Oct. 8th through 14th, 1995 was my first visit (certainly not the last). There are actually two hawk-watch/count sites: the rooftop of Hotel Bienvenido in the town of Cardel; and a platform tower 10 miles west at Chichicastele.

On my first day, following a delicious Mexican breakfast, I climbed the stairs to the roof where I was joined by perhaps another 12 hawk aficionados. The sun was already warming the earth, and heat waves blurred the distant mountains as thermals developed. Then, in the distance, a bird. A lot of birds.

A kettle of raptors. Another kettle. And another and another kettle formed. And the sky filled. It was a growing, multiplying, climbing, wheeling, milling, soaring, beautiful mass of raptors the likes of which I had never before imagined. So many birds in the air simultaneously that there were actually a few minor collisions and near misses occurring.

As raptors spread from horizon to horizon, riding the thermals to their highest and then streaming southward until the next thermal is found, their great numbers almost dulled the senses. Binoculars and telescopes diminish the spectacle because of their narrow field of view.

The birders around you can't stop uttering "oohs" and "aahs," for there aren't any words, at this moment, to adequately describe the scene they behold. Only as the sun settles in the west does anyone dare to ask the official counters, "how many today?" After dinner, the tally is announced: 596,527!! A good day. Not even close to a record. But, maybe tomorrow. I can hardly wait.

Each day was exciting and full of expectation. A record day would have been more than a million birds. It's difficult to comprehend such an enormous wave of passing raptors. If you can tear yourself away from the hawk watch, there are other birds too. Without a lot of effort, I was able to observe 179 species, including 27 different raptors.

I'm hooked. I'm going back. As I return to Veracruz, it will be with the sobering thought that overall raptor numbers are declining. And, I'll remember the reports that are again filtering out of Argentina about thousands of Swainson's hawks being found dead of pesticide poisoning. I'll worry. Can I do more. Surely I must.

Each time I band a hawk, or warbler, I wonder if I will ever see the bird again or hear of its recovery. I hope and pray that none will suffer an untimely and unnatural demise as they fly the gauntlet of migration. (For more on birdbanding at the *Allegra Collister Nature Area*, see page 7).

Who Said It?

"I'm old growth, myself."

Answer: elder statesman of the "pessimist school" of environmentalism, and an original Sierra Club pioneer, David Brower

Local Parents Defend Children Against Alien Invasion

....by LVAG, from information by Steve Armstead and
Kristine Crandall

It was not a scene from *Independence Day*, but it contained all the heart-stopping drama. A peregrine falcon couple, now the anxious parents of three fragile adolescents,* were under attack by invading climbers over the July 4th weekend. At least that was the falcon perception of the situation.

Out-of-state climbers, both uninformed and ill-informed, marched past all the "off-limits" signs to the Third Flatiron and began their ambitious ascent, oblivious to the increasing aerial agitation around them as the nesting falcons perceived their presence.

The climbers were novices, and therefore, by the time they had also been noticed by human authorities, they were unable to retreat down the rock face when so ordered. The climbing route led ever closer to the falcon nest, and the birds screamed warnings and performed threatening acrobatics around the two men as they finished climbing. At the top, the men took long minutes to collect all their gear and rappel down the other side. Meanwhile, a Mountain Parks Ranger was racing along the trail on the back approach to the Flatiron in order to intercept them. He arrived in time and—though it is of no comfort to the birds—issued a handsome and expensive summons.

*(the equivalent, in falcon-time)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION BOULDER COUNTY NATURE ASSOCIATION

Name _____

Address _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Student or senior citizen (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"/> Land Trust/subscriber (\$20 to Bldr Cnty Land Trust)	50
<input type="checkbox"/> Founder (\$70 to Boulder County Land Trust)	100
<input type="checkbox"/> Life member	300
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate member	500
<input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder (\$700 to Boulder County Land Trust)	1000

Membership year is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Members who have joined since October 1 are considered paid through the following year. Members receive a quarterly newsletter. Supporting members also receive a complimentary copy of each BCNA publication that is published during the membership year. New Boulder County Parks and Open Space Dept. Volunteer Naturalists receive a one-year general membership. Please make check payable to "Boulder County Nature Association" or "BCNA," address below.

Extra copies of the newsletter are sometimes available at the *Wild Bird Center*, or from the editor. To submit BCNA-related material to the editor, e-mail to andes@rmi.net, or send a 3.5-in. disk in Word, DOS-text or ASCII text to Linda Andes-Georges, 5684 Aurora Pl., Boulder CO 80303. Typed copy is also accepted.

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