

Winter Dipper-hunting, near and far

...by Alan Versaw, Bill Kaempfer, Rich Levad and K. Carden

A recent Internet Cobirds discussion (called a "thread") began with ideas from Alan Versaw on viewing dippers from a moving vehicle. We offer his comments, followed by those of others focusing on other parts of the state.



Due to the speed of the "game" and a dipper's coloration, this game is only really workable during winter months (November is good enough in most places)... I should add a disclaimer--this game should probably only be taken seriously by passengers in a car, not the driver. I don't always follow that rule myself, but there are stretches of road where I can't really bring myself to look any more--traffic in Colorado isn't what it was 10 years ago!

My nominations for the Top 10:

1. I-70, Glenwood Canyon (Colorado River), but only for passengers on passenger side of car in eastbound lanes.
2. Colorado 145 from Placerville to Sawpit (San Miguel River)
3. US-34, Big Thompson Canyon between Estes Park and Loveland, but you gotta be nuts to even think of looking in the creek if you're driving this congested road.
4. South Platte River, US-24, at Lake George. There's only a brief stretch where you can look, but this place can be pretty productive. In addition to dippers, I've seen Hooded Merganser, Osprey, and Barrow's Goldeneye here--plus a lot of more common stuff.
5. I-70 from Copper Mountain to Frisco (eastbound lane only). I don't know the name of the creek here, but it does seem to have a dipper or two most of the winter.

Snuggling in the Snow

Don't wait to make your reservation for annual ski retreat

The scenery is spectacular, the snow superb (we hope), and the company congenial. The annual BCNA XC ski trip to the Mt. Elbert Lodge in Twin Lakes (near Leadville) is guaranteed to be a memorable event. Join us on President's Day Weekend, Feb. 20-22.

Accommodations at the historic stage-stop bed-and-breakfast are luxurious (for BCNA!). Arrangements can be two to a room, three to a room, or two to a cabin in varying combinations (*see pricelist, page 7*). The group usually includes a total of a dozen to 15 people, but if we hurry, we can reserve for more.

Ask anyone who has attended for their impressions of previous trips. They'll tell you about gorgeous skiing eight miles up a wilderness valley... incredible snow... cruddy snow... too much snow... thrashing about in willow bogs up to our waist in snow... being stuck for hours in a blizzard on I-70... having a bonus day skiing in two feet of new powder... watching an ermine raid the compost pile outside while we drink hot spiced tea... stuffing ourselves at the traditional GOURMET supper on Saturday night: All of these things happen (but not all of them every year).

To participate, send check to BCNA for total to Naseem Munshi, 2595 N. 119th St., Lafayette CO 80026 (tel. 673-0933h, 664-0394w). Reservations are on a first-come, first-serve basis. **Note: Lodging costs can only be refunded if replacement lodgers are found.**

(for complete pricelist, see *Mt Elbert ski trip, p. 7*)



BCNA CALENDAR Winter to spring

- Sat.
Dec. 21st
7 a.m. -
?
- **Winter Solstice Celebration.** Meet at Teller Farms parking lot (on south side of Valmont) and hike to Boulder Creek Bridge on White Rocks/Ertl Farm trail. Bring poem or thought to share during brief sunrise ceremony, if you like. Optional breakfast at Rev. Taylor's in Niwot after. **Contact: Randy, 530-4355.**
- Thurs.
Jan. 1st
7:00-
10:00 a.m.
- **Sunrise Hike on Whiterocks Trail** (not the same as the Solstice hike, DUH! and there will be different critters in attendance). Bring finger food or hot beverage to share at Boulder Creek bridge. **Dress warmly.** Bald eagles, ferruginous hawks, red-tailed hawks, great blue herons, and white-tailed deer likely. Meet at Teller Farms Open Space parking lot, south side of Valmont (.5 miles west of 95th St.). **Contact: Steve, 494-2468.**
- Saturday
Jan. 10th
7:30 -
9:00 p.m.
- **Sea of Grass (revisited).** Steve Jones will present his 45-minute multimedia slide program on the Nebraska Sandhills. Ice cream and cookies. 3543 Smuggler Way, Boulder (take Greenbrier west from South Broadway, go 6 blocks past Fairview HS, turn right on Smuggler, go to end of street). **Contact Steve, 494-2468.**
- Saturday
Jan. 10th
- **Indian Peaks Bird Count Day.** Count period is from Dec. 20th to Feb. 15th (weather being somewhat capricious up there in the winter). It is fun to have a scientific excuse to be tramping around on skis or snowshoes, stalking wildlife. If you do not have an assigned sector or team, **contact Bill Kaempfer, 939-8005.**
- Saturday
Jan. 24th
6:00 p.m.
- **Annual Party and Election,** as well as story-telling time (bring slides) around the fire. Bring potluck dish to share as well. Location: home of Roger Jakoubek, 3065 24th St., Boulder. **Contact Kristine, 444-1955, or Roger, 449-3503.**



Don't be
caught by
surprise!
Memberships
expire
in December.
Renew
today.

Elections are NOT Over – BCNA Republic-rats are still after your votes

Elections for Board of Director members, in small associations like this one, tend to be a bit casual, especially if candidates are scarce. But we are always excited to have new people, new energy, and new perspectives joining us. We invite YOU to do so.

Our by-laws require seven to nine members on the Board. Two positions need to be filled for 1998. If you enjoy good company, great food, and thoughtful conversation with your cup of conservation tea, please consider coming "on board" with us, helping to steer the best environmental organization in Boulder (it's official now; see page 6). Or if you know someone else who fits this description, please contact one of the Nominating Committee: Mike Tupper, Randy Gietzen, and Holly Devaul.

For the Record

We are limited to two terms of two years, then we have to retire and take a break before being invited to serve again. Most of us hang around anyway, giving unsolicited advice and checking up on things.

Board members who have served one year: Fern Ford, Mike Tupper; *have served two years (one term):* Holly Devaul ("running" again), Tom Delaney (going off), Chaya Nanavati (going off), Kristine Crandall (going off in February); *have served three years:* Steve Jones, Cherie Long, Jim McKee

1997 BCNA Board

President: Kristine Crandall
V.P.: Steve Jones (494-2468)
Treasurer: Chaya Nanavati (772-3659)
Secretary: Mike Tupper (673-0933)
Members-at-large:
Cherie Long (447-0922)
Jim McKee (494-3393)
Holly Devaul (543-8730)
Tom Delaney (581-2478)
Fern Ford (449-0118)
Contacts and Committee Reps
Ind. Peaks Bird Count - Dave Hallock (258-3672)
Bodr. Cnty Land Trust - Joe Mantione (417-0948)
Field Trips - Steve Jones (494-2468)
State/regional legislative matters - Jim McKee (494-3393)
Partners in flight - Scott Severs (442-1322)
Prairie dogs - Randy Gietzen (530-4355)
Newsletter/Trails info - Linda A. Georges (543-9404)



THE RAPTOR'S EYE

Mini- and maxi-reports about ongoing local issues



City Open Space (and Related) Matters

...by LVAG

BCNA activists will want to keep their eagle eyes on the following ongoing issues:

- Trail creation in the North Boulder Valley area, specifically in the Habitat Conservation Areas in East Beech (bordered by N. 36 on the west and Niwot Rd. on the north, with Boulder Valley Farm trail complex on the south and the North Rim subdivision on the east), and on the Axelson property (bordered by the North Rim houses on the west, Niwot on the north, 55th St. on the east, and the Eagle Trail and protected wetlands on the south). Currently, trails are being planned along the periphery of the HCA on East Beech (alignment vigorously protested by North Rim homeowners) and somewhere in the area of Axelson (County easement/alignment also protested by the homeowners). The HCAs were originally set up to protect the area because of its prairie dog population and corresponding good hunting territory for raptors. There are somewhat acceptable alignments for some of these trails (call Randy, Scott, Steve or Kristine for more information-- phone nos. p. 2), but decisions will not be made until further public input is received by the OSBT during December.
- The South Boulder Creek Area Management Plan is underway. Our representative is Jacob Smith, phone 417-0648. Field trips to examine issues concerning this plan will begin in January. (Watch *Daily Camera* city meeting page for dates).
- The next area management plan to begin, sometime in 1998, will be the El Dorado area. In connection with protecting this beautiful and still partly-wild area, BCNA members should try to participate in the ongoing Front Range Mountain Backdrop Project, Phase II (call Pete Fogg of the County Land Use Dept. for meeting dates and information). Arvada's plans to develop the infamous Jefferson Center, along Rt. 93 and into the canyons, will heavily impact this entire area. *Anyone with friends in Arvada or in the Jefferson County Nature Assoc. should ask if they would be willing to show up at City Council meetings from time to time and squawk about this humongous project.* Call Richard Wahl (499-8638 or email richwahl@aol.com) for more information on opposing the Center.

Managing Mountain Parks Resourcefully

....submitted by Joe Mantione
for the City Mountain Parks Dept.

Mountain Parks will celebrate 100 years of preservation in 1998. What will the next 100 years hold for our mountain backdrop?

In January of 1998 the City of Boulder Mountain Parks Division will hold several public open houses to initiate input for a comprehensive management plan. Increasing pressures and potential impacts on Mountain Parks require a management process that can anticipate and prepare for future challenges and opportunities. The Mountain Parks Management Plan for Resource Protection and Visitor Use will be a framework within which day-to-day and long-term management decisions will be made. The plan will prescribe strategies for management and use that will best fulfill management objectives and achieve Mountain Park's mission of protecting the Parks' natural and cultural resources while providing opportunities for compatible recreational use.

The Management Plan Open Houses are an opportunity to communicate. We hope to have a broad spectrum of the community attend, and to provide all participants with an opportunity to:

- * learn more about the special qualities of the Park and the challenges that our natural and cultural treasures are facing.
- * get a clear understanding of how Mountain Parks and surrounding areas have been historically managed.
- * share their aspirations for the future of Mountain Parks.
- * provide ideas on how to balance the needs of visitors and the Park.

Be sure to join us on one of the following dates to help shape the future of your Mountain Parks! (Questions? Call 441-3408).

Wednesday, January 14, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., Municipal Building Lobby

Saturday, January 17, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m., Chautauqua Community House

Thursday, January 22, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Municipal Building Lobby

State of the Association Address

....by outgoing President Kristine Crandall

Another Busy Year – The Spice of BCNA Life:

I am writing this as I look out my window at the open meadow of major proportion, inlets of forested ground leading up to canyon faces showing off the latest snow, and Bear Peak bridging the earth and sky. As I reflect on the past year, fervent activist causes, friendly faces sharing in fieldtrips, various bird surveys, and ski outings – and a constantly changing Boulder County landscape come to mind. It's been a busy time, although this could just be me speaking as a first-year President! I suppose you can judge for yourself: BCNA has continued its regular participation in a number of Open Space issues, including the City Open Space's North Boulder Valley and South Boulder Creek Management Plans, the County Open Space's North Foothills Open Space Advisory Committee, the City's Dog Subcommittee, and continuous natural resource inventories. These lands are

where it's happening, for it's the Chautauqua meadow of major proportion as well as all the meadows of any proportion, the Flatirons as well as the many unnamed cliffs, and all of the other properties that we are so lucky to have in our Open Space programs – they are what sustain our unique blend of human and wild community.

This year, preservation of Open Space's natural flora and fauna has faced a strong challenge from the demands for public recreation use, while private lands continue to succumb to development. Boulder County's population is projected to increase from 266,100 presently to 350,000 by 2010 (a 32 percent increase!), which will include the addition of an estimated 31,400 new dwelling units. These pressures put a difficult twist on habitat protection measures, which don't receive as much weight as human-based motives on the land use scale.

(continued on page 6)



Kristine Crandall, center with plaque, proudly surrounded by many busy bees of BCNA on Oct. 22, 1997, the day of the presentation of our Conservation Award by the County Commissioners.

Tom Goldhawk Memorial Fund

The Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Foundation has established a memorial fund to honor Tom Goldhawk, who died of arterial lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease) on Sept. 24th. Tom was a dedicated birdwatcher and enthusiastic participant in Boulder County Audubon and BCNA conservation projects. His optimism, generosity, and courage inspired many of us, both before and during his long illness.

To contribute to the fund, send a check to the Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Foundation (Tom Goldhawk Memorial Fund), 2005 S. 112th Ave., Broomfield, CO 80020. Contributions will support the Foundation's urgent care center. A plaque honoring tom will be dedicated at the center some time next year. For more information, call Steve Jones (494-2468).



BCNA Publications and how to get them

The following recent BCNA publications are available to interested individuals:

- Hallock, Dave. 1997. Indian Peaks Bird Count 15-year Summary.
- Gietzen, Randy; Jones, Steve; McKee, Jim. 1997. Wintering Raptor Populations in Boulder County, 1983-1996.

You may call or write the address below to receive a hard copy. There is no charge to BCNA "Supporters" but the association always appreciates a small donation to defray mailing costs (mailing alone is \$3.50). Non-members may obtain copies for that amount. An even better way to obtain the information is to download them from our webpage.

For copies, contact Steve Jones, 3543 Smuggler Way, Boulder CO 80303 (303/494-2468).

BCNA Website

View the Association homepage on the Internet—and find the information you lost when you misplaced your newsletter. Address:

<http://www.csn.net/~randyg/bcna.html>

The Green Network

Do you have Internet access? Join the BCNA Nature-Net for rapid communication (special announcements like "Wine-tasting at Linda's place," or "Prairie dog photo party!"), and for pressuring local politicians and staffpersons when their intervention can benefit butterflies, birds, beebalm, etc.

To join our network, send this e-mail message to majordomo@lists.csn.net: "subscribe bcna-nature-net." Subsequently, you will receive instructions reminding you how to use the Naturenet. Whenever you need to contact the rest of us, you will post a single message to: bcna-nature-net@csn.net. *Voila!*

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

Further Netty questions? Call our tech wizard, Randy Gietzen: randyg@csn.net

No Longer the CEC

....by Jim McKee

The divorce is nearly final between the Colorado Environmental Coalition and the Wildlife Issues Steering Committee. Our 501C-3 application has been approved and a joint press release announcing the separation will be issued in the near future. CEC WISC will, I believe, become The Wildlife Alliance (TWA) and will continue to work on wildlife issues of statewide importance.

I am currently representing TWA on the steering committee for the April 19-22, 1998 Thorne Wildlife Symposium to be held in Glenwood Springs. More information regarding the symposium will be available in the future for those of you who may be interested in attending.

As a result of seeking speakers for a workshop on land use planning for the symposium, I have, somehow, ended up as a stakeholder in the implementation of the new management plan for the Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forest and Pawnee National Grassland.

(continued at top of next page)

(No longer the CEC, cont. from page 5)

I consider myself a representative of BCNA and, possibly, of TWA in this effort. One meeting, primarily to get acquainted, has been held so far.

In another area, TWA members are trying, with the help of the Colorado Woolgrowers Association and others, to develop a handbook/checklist relating to non-lethal, as well as lethal, methods of coyote control for sheep ranchers. Our own BCNA president, Kristine Crandall, will be working with this group to develop a spreadsheet which can be used by ranchers to develop a minimum cost coyote control strategy for their particular circumstances. We believe that the minimum cost approach will involve targeting specific depredating animals rather than simply trying to reduce the over-all coyote population.

Finally, the silly season is almost upon us. That is, the state legislature will soon be in session and we will be struggling frantically to minimize damage from the unenlightened (with respect to wildlife issues) in the legislature and, possibly, even support good legislation that may arise during the session.

(Presidential remarks, cont. from page 4)

Everywhere we look, open lands are being developed or split up by human activities. This is our shifting landscape, and yet BCNA's goal remains as strong as ever – to keep certain core natural areas in the County sheltered from the rough winds of change. In a survey done for Boulder County this year, 75 percent of respondents classified "protecting habitat for wildlife" as a very important activity and value of Boulder County Open Space areas, rating higher than any other activity. So, there is mutual support in the community. The hard part will always be to mobilize it. You can look forward to many opportunities in 1998 to continue involvement in Open Space management issues, including a bold comprehensive planning effort by the City of Boulder Mountain Parks, weed management challenges, and the County's proposed prairie dog management planning process.

I am pleased to report that BCNA's Allegra Collister bird-banding station received a Scientific and Cultural Facilities District grant this year, which will help maintain the station's enormous scientific contribution – led by the tireless and skilled efforts of Joe Harrison and Virginia Dionigi. I helped band my first bird this fall at the station, an American Tree Sparrow whose delicate

and yet structurally perfect feathered form recharged my fascination with birds. Randy Gietzen, Steve Jones and Jim McKee published their report "Wintering Raptor Populations in Boulder County, 1983-1996" this year (which also appeared in the *Colorado Field Ornithologists* journal). The report invokes BCNA's wintering raptor survey data to explain the importance of prairie dog colonies to wintering raptor populations, especially ferruginous hawks, in Boulder County. The loss of private land to development makes the maintenance of prairie dog populations on Open Space lands all the more vital. The raptor survey continues this winter, under the accomplished leadership of Holly DeVaul and Tom Delaney. And there are more publications to come, such as the 15-Year Summary of the Indian Peaks Bird Count included with this newsletter.

Finally, BCNA was honored with Boulder County's 1997 Land Conservation Award. We are the first *organization* (as opposed to *individual*) to receive this award, which is a true testament to the common causes and enthusiasm that brings us all together. The Boulder County Commissioners told us, through this award, that by keeping busy we are doing a good thing.



Having described all of these exciting activities, I am sad to say I will be resigning as President in February, as I leave Boulder to return to the Western Slope's Roaring Fork Valley, where I grew up. This is the only place that feels more like home than Boulder (and I've lived in a number of places!), a fact that highlights the difficulty I had in deciding to move. I will miss so much about Boulder, especially the friends I have made, the open plains and its soaring raptors, the ponderosa pine foothills sprinkled with the peeps of pygmy nuthatches, and cliff faces that harbor the golden eagle nests I have been privileged to monitor. The current board and many individuals behind the scenes have made my tenure as board member and president a dream. I feel my experience with BCNA, and as a volunteer naturalist with Boulder County Parks and Open Space, has prepared me well to take on environmental causes in the Aspen area (I know, I'll need some stamina there, too!) – for which I will always be grateful. So long Bear Peak, and may BCNA stay busy.

Thanks to All of You for your Support and Friendship,

Kristine

From eagles to elk

Allegra Collister Birdbanding Report

....submitted by Joe Harrison

The 1997 fall banding season was somewhat slow and, at times, almost routine. The first day of banding was Aug. 28th and the last was Oct. 22nd (on this date the nets were frozen and couldn't be opened until warmed by the sun). Banding occurred on 19 days for a total of 72 hours of open-net time. Our busiest day was Sept. 17th when 34 individual birds of 12 species were captured.

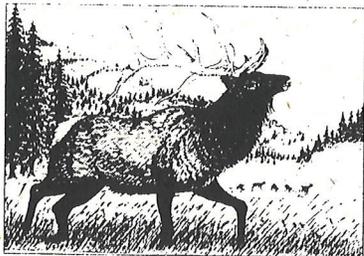
Indeed, activities were fairly routine with two exceptions. Two new species were banded: two Pygmy Nuthatches on Sept. 29th, and a Northern Shrike on Oct. 20th. This brings the total number of species banded at ACNA to 101!

A total of 237 birds of 38 different species were captured and banded. Orange-crowned Warblers (45) and Wilson's Warblers (44) accounted for 37.5% of the total. All the other species were represented by much smaller numbers.

On one beautiful but chilly morning, two bull elk stood near the fence and observed us while we removed birds from the nets. They seemed to be very curious about what we were doing. We certainly had no intention of trying to "band" a bull elk.

Two mature Golden Eagles soared over the gulch with an sharp eye on the prairie dog communities to the north and south. But the resident Red-tailed Hawk couldn't resist harassing them in an attempt to drive them away. What a show! Several minutes of spectacular aerobatics entertained and delighted the birdbanding team.

Otherwise... it was a relatively slow season. Nonetheless it was (as always) very enjoyable. The unpredictable discoveries and thrill of being close to small creatures *almost* makes a person forget the long, hot, and sweaty hours of hard work that are necessary before the station can be opened at the beginning of each season—or the toil of closing.



Allegra Collister Nature Area (a.k.a. Lykins Gulch): ACCESS PROTOCOL

It is clear that the Allegra Collister Nature Area holds an attraction for many birds, and other creatures too. Because of its value as a study site for a variety of disciplines, the BCNA has negotiated for, and administers, a conservation easement for this critical habitat. **It is private property.** It is important that the landowner's wishes be respected, and the intent of the agreement honored. Written permission must be obtained prior to entering the property. Access will be limited. Only those who are conducting pre-approved studies, or who are performing planned maintenance activities, will be allowed routine entry.

Trail-lover needed

Come on, confess, there's more than one of us closeted trail-lovers in this organization. And someone who enjoys those trails but is also acutely aware of their costs to the environment would be the perfect representative for BCNA to the City Trails Committee. It is not good to leave these forums to the domination of blinder-wearing recreationists. Someone must be there to remind everyone that some (most? all?) trails have a down side, and to present data to support that view when necessary (or, on the other hand, to tell BCNA when a trail with positive benefits like educational opportunities is being suggested, if such a thing should happen). *Please call Kristine to say you'll attend these once-a-month meetings* (usually the first Thurs.) **URGENT!**

(Mt. Elbert ski trip, continued from page 1)

Prices for various modes of accommodation are:
Up to 12 people can stay in the **Lodge (Bed & Breakfast)**;
Cost: \$44.25 per person for two nights:

3 rooms with 1 queen size bed (2 people/room = 6 people);

2 rooms with 1 queen and 1 twin bed (up to 3 people/room = 6 people).

Cabins are also available: 1 bedroom (2 people) \$56.25/night
Cabins are not B&B; however, they can be, for an additional \$4.50 per person (must notify in advance).

Beaver Lodge: 2-bedroom (up to 6 people) \$82.50 per night;
The Barn: 4-bedroom (up to 8 people) \$105.00 per night.

See page one ("Snuggling...") for details on how to reserve space for yourself or your little group on President's Day weekend.

BCNA Research Grants

BCNA will budget a portion of its vast treasury ☺ to fund research projects on a first-come, first-served basis during 1998. Research should involve natural resources in Boulder County. Previous grants, for example, have supported research on the impacts of development on solitary vireo reproduction, on corvid predation of songbirds, and on old-growth forest inventories. Currently, many County and City agencies need careful research to help formulate management policies. City Open Space, for example, needs research relating to the impacts (or lack of impacts) of recreational activities on ecosystems and species. Other needed research concerns "pest management:" the effects of weed-control treatments on Bell's twinpod and on needle-and-thread grassland communities, or the effects of diffuse knapweed infestations on Bell's twinpod, etc. A typical BCNA award is for about \$250. Recipients agree to provide the Association with a written summary of their research results, and to participate in our symposia when appropriate. Contributions to the newsletter are also appreciated. Those interested in applying for a grant should send a short (3-5 page) proposal describing their research project to: Kristine Crandall, 1182 Juniper, Boulder 80304. The Board will consider proposals in early spring.

(Dipper hunting, continued from page 1)

6. Colorado 145, Dolores River, from Dolores to Rico. A fairly long stretch, but you always get one here in the winter.

7. US-160, South Fork of Rio Grande from near top of Wolf Creek Pass almost down to South Fork. Often tough to see the river, but pretty good if you're heading east.

8. US-50, Arkansas River, from Parkdale to Howard. Another long stretch, but if you keep looking, you do eventually find one on most trips.

9. Colorado 149, Lake Fork of the Gunnison for about 10 miles or so below (north of) Lake City. Haven't done this much during the appropriate season, but seems to have all the right qualities.

10. Colorado 149, North Fork of the Rio Grande from just above South Fork nearly to Creede. Ditto comments on #9.

Admittedly, this list has a decided bias toward southern Colorado. Maybe some of you from up north can add your comments. I thought of adding Clear Creek Canyon, but I've never seen one there and I've always felt the traffic was too heavy for a driver to sneak a peak.



Bill Kaempfer adds:

I hope to get one during winter commutes up Boulder Canyon between Boulder and Four Mile Canyon. This bit gets flushed everyday by discharge from a hydro plant, so it generally is ice-free. However, I much prefer dipper when I can see them on the small spillway of the bitty creek viewed right out of my bedroom window! (One of my better "feeder" birds!)

Rich Levad adds:

My wife hates these stretches because I cannot resist counting the dippers. I would add:

11. Colo Hwy 65 from I-70 to 330. These twelve miles are always good for a half dozen or so from December through March.

Another highway winter count my wife doesn't like much is the Bald Eagles along Hwy 70 for Grand Junction to Eagle. My record is 23, but she was driving. I have seen 18 while driving.

K Carden adds:

Regarding dippers in Glenwood Canyon: this isn't at 55 mph, but just wanted to mention that the Grizzly Creek and No Name exits in the canyon have rest areas where I've seen more than a dozen in just a short walk. People were very nearby but it didn't seem to bother the dippers. Close-up viewing is awesome!

And While we're talking about Birds...

On Nov. 20th, Nick Komar of Ft. Collins observed the following drama: One adult bald eagle was sitting on the edge of the ice in the middle of College Lake at the CSU campus. A second adult soared over the lake from the foothills in the west, circled around and descended, talons first, toward a spot on top of the first eagle's head. The latter avoided catastrophe with some aversive hops to the side. The new arrival proceeded to stretch its neck out, beak open, presumably talking (or shouting) but out of my earshot.

Now a third adult approached from the foothills, but this fellow never had a chance to come down to the ice, as the offensive-minded second eagle immediately took to the air to continue its aggressive behavior toward the latest arrival. I watched the two as they flew east, out of sight, with the aggressive eagle dive-bombing the innocent intruder, like a crow after a red-tailed hawk. Unlike a hawk, however, this third eagle seemed to be flying (flapping) for its life!

September, long gone already, and its Creature features

...submitted by LVAG

Sept. 13th: The annual BCNA moonlight hike, this year at Caribou Hill, had some dramatic moments. It all began quietly enough, as we hiked peacefully to treeline, with notches in our belt for great mushrooms, 5 bird species and a snowshoe hare (still in summer "plumage"). But at that point we were set upon by a real slam-banger of a thunderstorm and spent the next hour huddling under (low) trees in an attempt to wait it out and then continue in order to picnic at the summit. By the time the storm was gone and the moon smiling again, we were wet and cold and hungry. Eating our international potluck supper, standing up, we had mystic views of the Silver Lake watershed with a navy blue and rose sky behind, like the aurora borealis, all shot through with lightning. Randy and Mike bravely stayed behind to camp while the rest of us beat a retreat to warm baths and civilization.

Late September: on the way to wildlife-hunting in the Lyons area, I saw a black bear cub galloping across the highway towards Heil Ranch. The Hall Ranch still had many interesting though expected birds.. Present in abundance were mountain bluebirds, immature T. solitaires, rock and house wrens, both goldfinches, Brewer's sparrows, Virginia's warblers, the faithful golden eagle on his craggy perch overlooking the prairie dog village, and... a snowshoe hare, this one in fall "plumage" (salt-and-pepper, like my own HAIR.



"Better hop to it!
Another cement bike trail going in..."

Boulder Can do it Too

...submitted by LVAG

Inspired by a recent eulogy of the place, I decided to explore the Wheatridge "Greenbelt" in September for the first time. Unfortunately, I wasted the first half hour after dawn thrashing about on the wrong end of the creek (the one where you find broken frisbees hanging in the trees, 4WD tracks everywhere, and empty plastic

barrels that smell like skunks). Feeling a little sour about seeing/hearing nothing but starlings, bluejays, magpies, and earth-moving machines, I retreated to the car and then realized my mistake. I needed to go west.

I had been advised to seek out the frequent phantoms of the place—people like birdwatcher Bob Spencer. The first one I found was named Al Terry, like me a transplanted Easterner (as I happened to be hunting a northern cardinal who was nesting in Wheatridge this year we both said "I'm from the Cardinal state"—but Mr. Terry is from W. VA. and me from VA). He was feeding the dozens of half-tame fox adolescents that roam the woods; one of the pups is a striking black. Of course, with so many people in the area coddling them, the fox population explodes and then crashes, via coyote kills, traffic, and disease. I gently chided my guide, but how to dissuade? People do so love to feed "wild"-life.

Once immersed in the greenery of this end of this creek corridor, I was impressed with the habitat, one of the lushest areas I've seen in Colorado. I can see why, in spite of really heavy visitation (by bikers, walkers, busloads of schoolkids, etc), the creatures haven't totally given up on the area. Far from it; in fact, according to the Lane Guide, 180 species of birds have been recorded here. Looks like a good place for frogs and salamanders too, among other things.

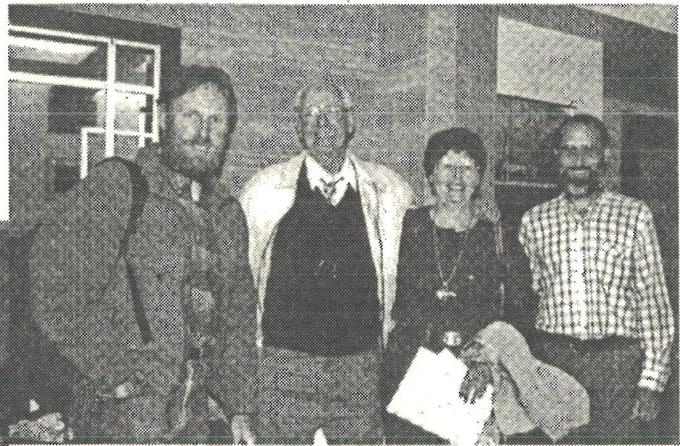
I began to think about areas in Boulder which I believe could have this kind of habitat potential: there are several, one of the most obvious being Coal Creek. Boulder Audubon and City Open Space are taking this one under their wing for protection and habitat improvement.

There is another, however. It is "trashed" now (by human standards) but still very popular with wildlife. It is generally located around the confluence of the big Boulder creeks: the Boulder, South Boulder, and Four Mile Creeks. The Transportation Dept. already has big plans for this area: it may become the Pearl St. Parkway, and it will certainly host a Greenways trail (set to begin next year) unless someone sponsors another kind of vision for it. The Transportation projects have been undergoing discussion for years. But no one has dreamed aloud about a different possibility, one which would welcome humans in only the most discreet way possible while the emphasis is placed on creating a home for wildlife. We could do it even better than Wheatridge. Is there a champion out there somewhere?

*BCNA Photo Scrapbook
Autumn 1997*



It's good to agree (Jim McKee and Paul Danish)



Before the County Award presentation (see page 6 for details), some folks are feeling jolly (Dave Hallock, Lee and Virginia Evans, Mike Figgs)



BCNA folkdance party: setting up before the stompin' and shouting' (Scott Severs and Kristine Crandall)

Learning where to put the feet (Carol McLaren & Randy Gietzen)



Group swing (front row: Scott, Elaine Hill, Susan Harris, and Carol)



Little hummer a Little late

...from information received from Scott Severs

During the second week in December, a very late-lingering hummingbird who had been surviving on feeder nectar near Wonderland Lake was determined to be an Anna's hummer (very rare here). The homeowner was concerned for its life because of cold and snow, and Greenwood Rehab. Center was called in to capture it, fatten it up on insects and spiders, and (with good luck) return it to the wild in Arizona or California. Such a feat was accomplished in the 1980s, so perhaps this lost little Anna's also will see the Napa Valley again. Call Scott at the Wild Bird Center to learn the end of the story (tel. 442-1322).

Art Credits In this issue:

P. 1, Ermine, from *Guide to Mammals of Colorado*, Hugo Rodeck (CU, 1967). P.2, owl and mouse from *America's favorite backyard wildlife*, Kit & George Harrison (Simon & Schuster, 1985). P. 5, owl, from *La Hulotte*, #25, ed. Christine Deom, 08240 Boul't aux Bois, France. P. 6, junco, from *Common bird songs*, Donald Borror (Dover, 1967): P. 7, elk by Carl James Freeman, 2485 Herring Rd., Arcadia, MI. P.8; dipper by LVAG. P. 9, cartoon, *La Hulotte* as above. P.10, *La Hulotte*, as above.

Sleepy Lyon Considers Resource Preservation Never Too Late

...submitted by LVAG from Internet message

It appears that the City of Lyon and its Planning Commission are now working on a complete revision of the City Comprehensive Plan. One aspect of the process has involved setting up a Citizens' Advisory Committee which is taking "resource preservation, wildlife protection, water supply and quality" into account.

For more information on this, or to offer help, contact D.W. King at email address cerulean@oneimage.com.

Raptor Rhapsodies

...submitted by Holly Devaul

The 14th annual winter raptor monitoring project got off to a great start this fall, with approximately 30 people volunteering their time. Nine of these are newcomers to the project, which will help us to increase our field effort as well as distribute the effort more evenly over the survey area. We hope this will be our best year yet!

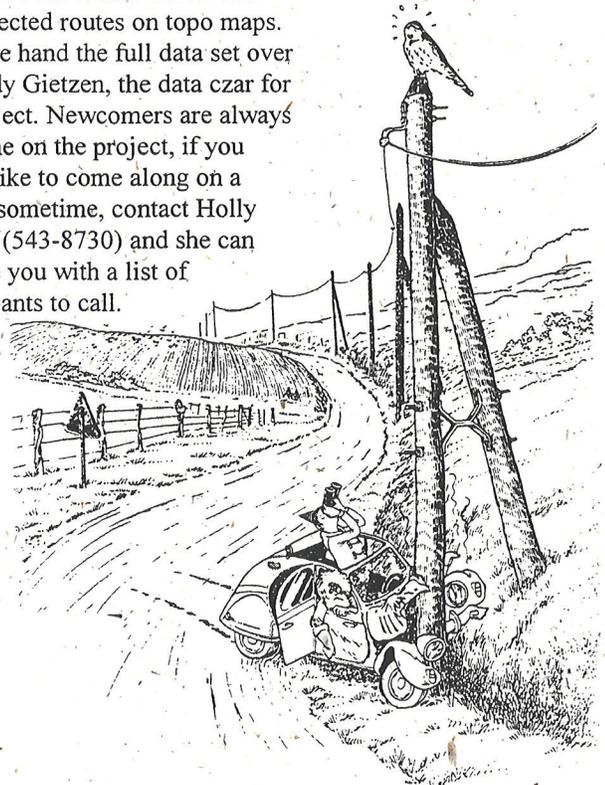
Volunteers agree to complete at least 5 surveys between October 15-March 15th, driving the 12- to 30- mile routes about once a month. Each route takes as little as one hour, or as much as 4 hours depending on the length and the density of

birds. We have 4 routes across the county, as far north as Rabbit Mountain in Golden Eagle country, and extending south to Superior and Marshall. Each route has a distinctive character, with some featuring outstanding waterfowl-viewing in addition to birds of prey.

Other routes are less scenic, but just as important in documenting the long term shifts and trends in species distribution and relative abundance, especially with respect to development and habitat loss. Data have been used over the years for just this purpose at public hearings and other land use projects.

The number of birds seen on a route ranges widely, with as few as 10 on the routes where development has displaced prairie dog colonies, which contrasts with 50 on the popular (but exhausting!) Rabbit Mountain route. In mid-November, a group recorded 42 birds along this route, including four Bald Eagles, one of which was an immature seen interacting with an immature Golden, locking talons in the sky. Other sightings that day included elk at Rabbit Mountain, and a nice variety of waterfowl at Swede Lakes. Species diversity was low at that time, dominated by American Kestrels and Red-tails of all plumage varieties, but with only one Rough-legged Hawk and no Ferruginous Hawks. Good looks at several Harriers was a nice treat though. Cold and sunny days are the best for surveying, as the birds are less likely to be soaring high and the volunteers can soak up the sun in between roadside stops to scope out a difficult ID. Not all surveys are so productive or so sunny: as one veteran volunteer was heard saying, sometimes the best thing about the survey is getting back into the car!

The group will reconvene in the spring to collect data sheets and plot selected routes on topo maps. Then we hand the full data set over to Randy Gietzen, the data czar for the project. Newcomers are always welcome on the project, if you would like to come along on a survey sometime, contact Holly Devaul (543-8730) and she can provide you with a list of participants to call.



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. Please make check payable to "Boulder County Nature Association" or "BCNA," P.O. Box 493, Boulder, CO 80306.

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.

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

