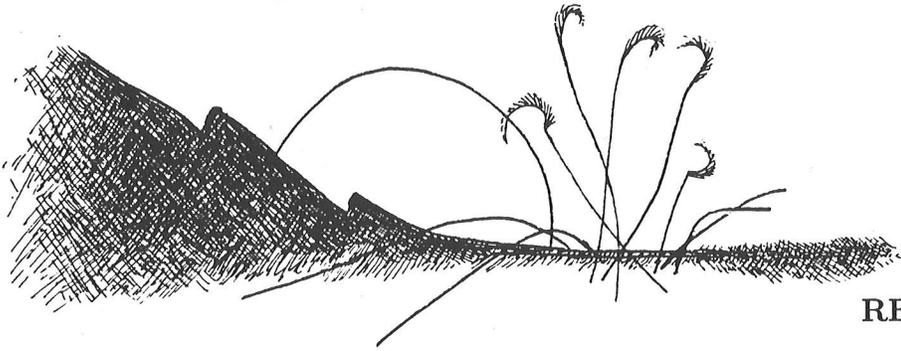


Boulder County Nature Association



Newsletter
Fall 1998
Volume 15 no. 4

RECENT BCNA PUBLICATIONS

BCNA publications are distributed to all supporting members. They are available at cost to other interested folks. To order, call or write Steve Jones, 3543 Smuggler Way, Boulder, CO 80303, 303-494-2468.

In Appreciation

Our thanks to Linda Andes-Georges for her hard work on the BCNA newsletter for the past several years. Linda brought a light and humorous touch to the newsletter despite the constant presence of numerous conservation issues. Linda also unfailingly assembled a wide variety of articles, net discussions and general ecological gleanings from a wide variety of sources, often to make up (ahem) for the lack of original submittals by BCNA members. Thank you Linda, and we hope you take some time for yourself now.

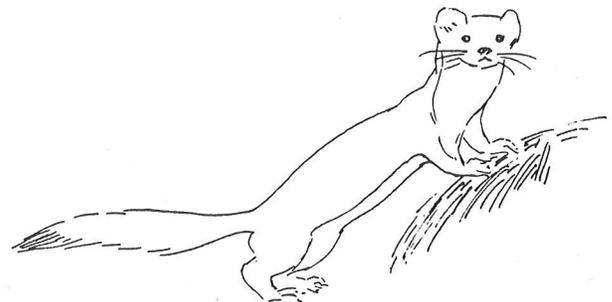
- Dionigi, Virginia, Joe Esposito, and Joe Harrison. 1998. Allegra Collister Nature Area spring 1998 bird banding report. 7 pp.
- Lederer, Nan, Liz Caile, and Steve Armstead. 1998. Cliff-nesting raptors in Boulder County 1997 status report. 9 pp.
- Gietzen, Randy, Stephen Jones, and Richard McKee. 1997. Wintering raptor populations in Boulder County, 1983-1996. 20 pp.
- Hallock, Dave. 1997. Indian Peaks Bird Counts fifteen-year summary. 18 pp.
- Forthcoming in fall/winter 1998: Owls of Boulder County (Steve Jones and Margy Lanham), and Boulder County avian species of special concern revised list (Dave Hallock).

Whoops

In our summary of 1997 BCNA volunteer projects in the previous newsletter, we omitted one of our most important and volunteer-intensive research projects, the bird-banding at the Allegra Collister Preserve. During 1997, volunteers at the preserve logged approximately 900 hours banding birds, recording data, and pulling weeds. Call Joe Harrison (772-3481) or Virginia Dionigi (776-2609) for information about this project. See their summary of spring bird-banding results on page 7 in this newsletter

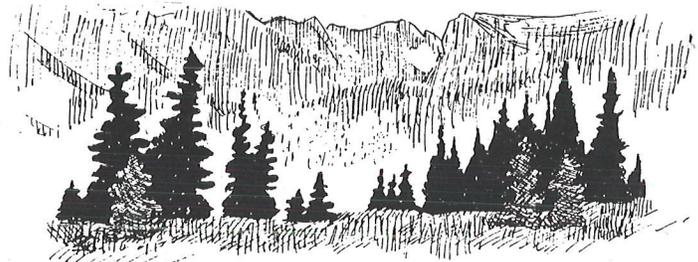
Earth Verse

Wide enough to keep you looking
Open enough to keep you moving
Dry enough to keep you honest
Prickly enough to make you tough
Green enough to go on living
Old enough to give you dreams



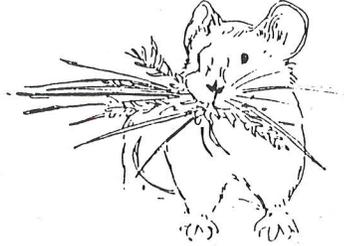
—Gary Snyder, *Mountains and Rivers Without End*,
Counterpoint, ISBN 1-887178-57-0

Fall 98



BCNA Calendar

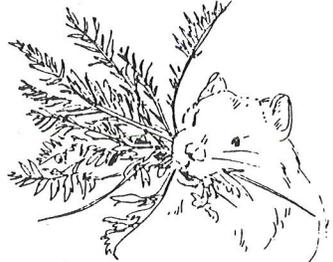
Saturday, September 19
Indian Peaks fall bird count. Call Bill Kaempfer (939-8005) if you would like to join a group or adopt a new area.



Saturday, October 31
Annual Autumn Bonfire and Potluck at 5:30 pm at Mike and Naseem's. North African food theme. (673-0933)

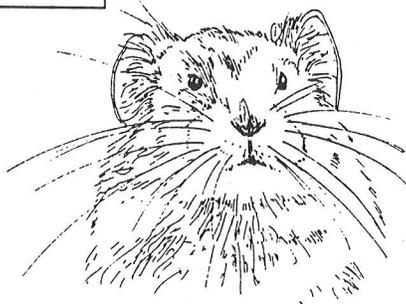


Friday, September 25
Board of Directors meeting at Jim McKee's, 2725 Julliard Street, in South Boulder, 6:30-8:30 p.m. All members are welcome. Call Steve (494-2468) if you would like to add an item to the agenda.



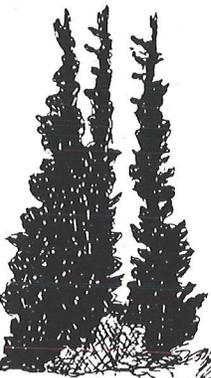
Saturday-Sunday, November 14-15
Campout in Pawnee Grassland to view Leonid meteor shower? Call Randy (530-4355) if this sounds intriguing.

Saturday, October 3
Wintering raptor survey organizational meeting at Holly Devaul's, 3970-O Colorado Blvd., at 10 a.m. New volunteers are always welcome for this easy and enjoyable research project. Call Holly (415-0464) for more information.



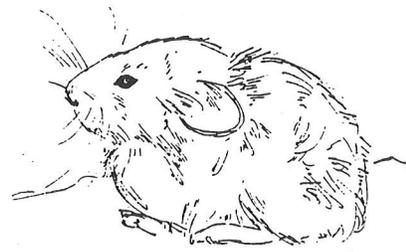
Sunday, December 20
Boulder Christmas Bird Count. Beginners are always welcome on this all-day count. Call Bill Kaempfer (939- 8005) to join a group.

Tuesday, December 22
Winter solstice sunrise hike on White Rocks Trail. Steve (494-2468) and Randy (530-4355) will lead this short annual hike near White Rocks (we don't have a permit to enter the preserve, itself). Meet at Teller Farms parking area, Valmont Road one-half mile west of 95th Street, at 7 a.m. If you like, bring a poem, quotation, or thought to share during a short solstice celebration at the Boulder Creek bridge. Optional breakfast will follow at Rev. Taylor's, in Niwot.



Saturday, October 3
Annual (more or less) evening ascent of South Arapaho Peak. Enjoy a potluck picnic as the full moon rises over the tundra. Call Naseem or Mike (673-0933) for details.

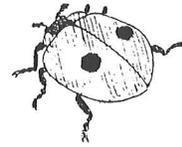
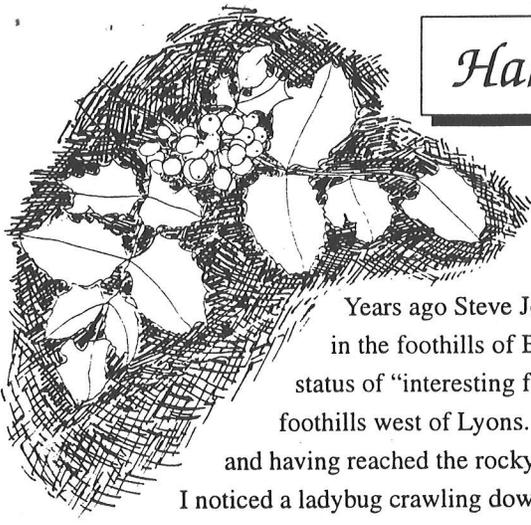
December-January
Indian Peaks winter bird count. Call Dave Hallock (258-3672) for details.



Habitats of Boulder County

of Bugs and Bears

submitted by Mike Figs

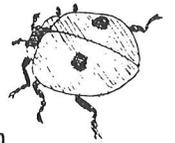


Years ago Steve Jones brought to our attention the large congregations of ladybugs in the foothills of Boulder County in the fall. For me this was largely relegated to the status of "interesting factoid of local natural history" until a fall hike a few years later in the foothills west of Lyons. Nan and I were hiking on one of those brilliant, glorious late fall days, and having reached the rocky crest of a ridge, paused for a rest. Looking down at the rocks where we sat, I noticed a ladybug crawling down into an interstice of the rock pile. Remembering Steve's comment, I picked up the top rock and looked underneath to find dozens of ladybugs. Examining more rocks revealed hundreds of them, in dense packs side by side and several layers deep. Carefully putting the rocks back to avoid disturbing the ladybugs further, or inadvertently crushing them, I remember a sense of satisfaction at having first hand experience with this phenomenon, another piece of the ecological puzzle duly observed.

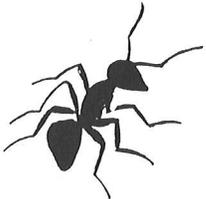
Shortly afterwards I ordered from the US Forest Service Intermountain Research Station the proceedings from a grizzly bear habitat symposium. Buried deep within this document was a paper titled "Grizzly Bears, Insects, and People: Bear Management in the McDonald Peak Region, Montana."¹ This paper discussed a pattern of grizzly bear family groups congregating on McDonald Peak over a sixty year period of observation. Here the bears, mostly females with cubs, gathered to graze in the alpine/subalpine meadows and eat insects, primarily "ladybird beetles" (*Hippodamia caseyi*) and army cutworm moths (*Euxoa auxiliaris*). These insects make long migrations from the prairies



to mountains; in the case of the beetles it is thought that they hibernate on mountaintops for protection from the extreme cold of the lowlands, the snowpack providing insulation from the cold. Field work in British Columbia determined that the beetles select south-facing slopes among fractured boulders covered with lichens (the same general setting Nan and I observed here), these sites becoming snow-free earlier in the spring. Insect movements to the sites begin in early September and are finished by mid-October. In Montana the beetles gather in such dense aggregations on McDonald Peak that one observer stated 5 to 10 gallons could be collected in a day.



This information sparked my curiosity. In my mind, the ladybug issue had now moved beyond an interesting annual cycle in the life of an insect to a much larger issue. Grizzly bears no longer inhabit the Front Range, but black bears do. These bears commonly seek out the foothills in mid-July for ripening raspberries and currants, and drop even lower in August and September to the outer foothills to feed on chokecherries. Bear scats packed with chokecherry seeds are commonly encountered in the fall. Is it possible that bears returning to higher elevations later in the fall feed on ladybugs, prior to hibernation? Black bears are known to roll over rocks to feed on ant larvae and grubs. Would they miss this opportunity to feed on ladybugs at a time of year when their nutrition needs are highest? Could the aphids on the rose bushes in my garden that feed the ladybugs be providing a critical food for the bears in the mountains?



¹Klaver, Robert W. et al. 1985. Grizzly Bears, Insects, and People: Bear Management in the McDonald Peak Region, Montana—in Contrera, Glen P. and Keith E. Evans, Proceedings—Grizzly Bear Habitat Symposium, Missoula, MT, April 30-May 2. Intermountain Research Station, Ogden UT. General Technical Report INT-207.

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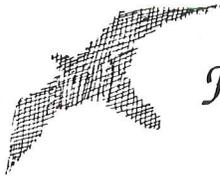
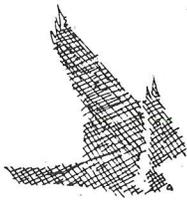


of Bugs and bears continued...

Well, I don't know. I have never followed up on this question. Alas, I have spent the greater part of the past 12 years trying to save what remains of the local open lands, rather than studying what is on those lands. But now I want to put the question out to all of you, perhaps stimulate your interest too. Check those bear scats this fall! While you are out stumbling along the open space trails, brooding over the latest political controversy, take the time to record what you find. Pass it on, report it in the newsletter or on the net. We have rare bird reports. Why not rare scat reports? Its time to find out what those bears are doing up in the mountains, now that they have been removed from the downtown mall in Boulder.

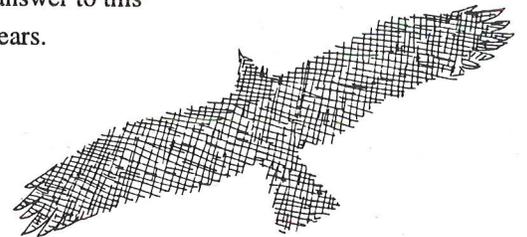
What I can report from the ramblings that Nan and I have made is that bears will feed on Oregon grape (*Mahonia repens*) berries in season (many scats exclusively packed with seeds) and ants (leaving tell tale signs of chitinous exoskeletal remains).

And for this fall, I pledge to put aside my work, family duties, community issues and other obligations for at least one day, to be spent in specific pursuit of the answer to this question that has been intriguing me for many years.



Falcons 13, Eagles 8

by Nan Lederer



The cliff-nesting raptors in Boulder County had quite a productive year, with golden eagles showing their best nest success since 1993 (8 young fledged), while prairie and peregrine falcons fledged fewer young than last year, but still held their own compared to the average of the last few years. There were a few disappointments, but also a few pleasant surprises, and as always, a few mysteries.

The Boulder Mountain Parks **eagles** had a particularly successful year, with 2 young fledged from both the Lefthand Palisades and Skunk Canyon nests. Four other nests in the county produced one young each (Boulder Canyon, Lyons, Rabbit Mountain, and North St. Vrain), while only one nest failed (South St. Vrain). After more than 10 years of searching, during which the known nest site of the North St. Vrain eagles was not used, an alternative nest site was finally found, and sure enough, it was active.

Peregrine falcons fledged young from the Matron and Eldorado Mountain as they did last year, (total of 5), but the Third Flatiron nest failed. Our hopes for a second attempt did not materialize.

Prairie falcons did well, producing at least 8 young from 3 sites in the Mountain Parks and Eldorado Canyon State Park, while 2 other nests were apparently active but could not be confirmed. The return of prairies to a territory

not used in several years may be a good sign that these falcons are rediscovering how to coexist with the peregrines, which are making a comeback and can outcompete the prairies for nest sites.

Now we can only hope that those young birds are faring well out in the wide world, where many dangers await them. One young falcon of undetermined species was found injured in the State Park, and taken to a rehabilitation center. It's a pleasure to see immature golden eagles cruising over the prairie dog towns, and to wonder which nest they came from, and if they will someday return to nest here themselves.

Another important development, beginning last year, is that the Jefferson County Parks and Open Space Department is coordinating nest monitoring of cliff nesting raptors in Jefferson County. Their work is quite thorough and is comparable to our level of effort here in Boulder County.

Many thanks to the rangers and volunteers who do the field work and data compilation that makes it possible for us to track the status of these raptors.



Breeding Bird Atlas Out This Fall

submitted by Hugh Kingery

The Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas, ten years in the making, and worth the wait, will come out this fall! BCNA members, as Atlas participants and supporters, can see how a giant citizen-science effort produced this first breeding bird atlas in the Rocky Mountains. The 600-page book, edited by Hugh Kingery, describes the breeding distribution and biology of 265 species of birds which breed in Colorado. It has chapters on Colorado ecosystems, post-settlement changes to Colorado habitats, Colorado ornithologists, and a 16-page folio with color photographs of Colorado habitats, nests, nestlings, and fledglings.

The Species Accounts, written by 30 Colorado atlasers, describe habitats, breeding cycles, and distribution of all birds which breed in the state. Each account maps the Colorado breeding distribution, charts the habitats which the species uses, and depicts the dates of breeding activity. This shows the best current information about where each species breeds in Colorado, and will constitute the benchmark for further studies. Sketches of each species, by Pueblo artist Radeaux, show all types of breeding behavior reported by atlas field workers. The book cover (front and back) features a Radeaux painting with his unique blend of detailed wildlife depictions with stylized patterns of nature from ancient cultures.

The book will carry a List Price of \$34.95, but orders received by November 1 receive a \$5.00 discount: Send a check for \$34.95 (\$29.95 plus \$5.00 handling fee) to Colorado Wildlife Heritage Foundation, PO Box 211512, Denver 80221.

* * * * *

The Atlas project, assisted by Audubon chapters, bird clubs, and government wildlife agencies in the state, including a substantial proportion of Colorado Partners in Flight, surveyed the state for breeding birds from 1987 to 1994. Due to support by Great Outdoors Colorado and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the book's publishers (Colorado Bird Atlas Project and Colorado Division of Wildlife) can offer the book at a bargain price.

Atlasers sampled blocks three miles on a side, one in each topographic map in Colorado. The book aggregates data they turned in from 1745 blocks. Over 1200 people participated in this largest-ever survey of Colorado birds. The Atlas database contains 86,498 bird records with information on locations, habitats, and seasonal breeding behavior for the 265 species. The Atlas book condenses this data into readable and informative essays on each species.

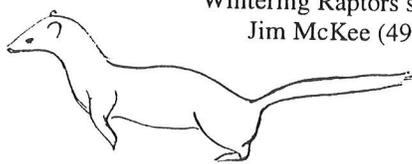
BCNA members had a big part in the Atlas as more than 20 members surveyed over 100 blocks. Dave Hallock atlined many blocks as a volunteer, and did so well that the Atlas hired him as a paid field worker ("Best job I ever had," he said).

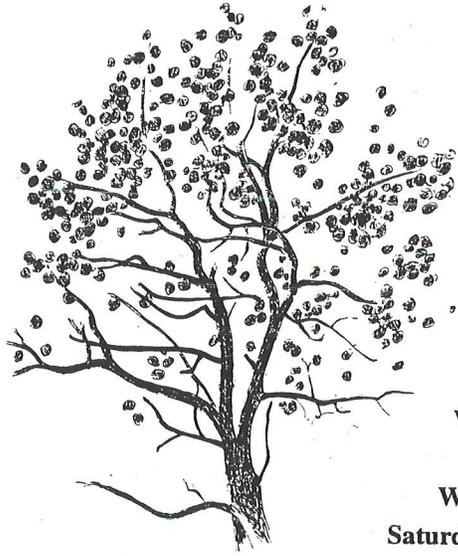
Committees and Specialists

Birdbanding — Joe Harrison (772-3481)
Boulder County Comp Plan — Mike Figgs
Cliff-nesting raptors — Steve Armstead (441-3408),
Nan Lederer, Mike Figgs (447-1899)
Dog management issues — OPEN
Ind. Peaks Bird Count — Dave Hallock
(258-3672), Bill Kaempfer (939-8005)
Natl. Forest Mgmt. — Tim Hogan (444-5577)
Newsletter — Mike Figgs (447-1899)
Open Space liaisons — Jacob Smith
(443-5518), Scott Severs (442-1322)
Parties, Special events — Naseem Munshi (673-0933)
Partners in flight — Scott Severs (442-1322)
Prairie dogs — Randy Gietzen (530-4355)
Publications — Steve Jones (494-2468)
Preserve Unique Magnolia — Cherie Long (447-0922)
State/Regional Wildlife issues — Jim McKee (494-3393)
Trails issues — Leslie Glustrom (543-0302)
Wintering Raptors survey — Holly Devaul (415-0464),
Jim McKee (494-3393), Dora Perry (652-0601)

1998 BCNA Board

Acting President — Steve Jones
(494-2468)
V.P. — Holly Devaul (415-0464)
Treasurer — Dan Murphy
(499-2771)
Secretary — Mike Tupper (673-0933)
Members-at-large:
Fern Ford (449-0118)
Cherie Long (447-0922)
Jim McKee (494-3393)
Dora Perry (652-0601)
Tim Hogan (444-5577)





Boulder County Natural and Cultural History Events

Call 441-3950 for information about registration and meeting places.

Wednesday, September 23, 6-7:30 p.m. Mountain lions, with Chaya Nanavati and Joan Ray.
Hall Ranch group shelter.

Wednesday, September 30, 7-8:30 p.m. Mountain lions and black bears, with Roger Bechard.

Saturday, October 3, 9-11 a.m. Shortgrass prairie, with Mark Brennan.

Sunday, October 4, 2-3:30 p.m. Rock Creek Farm history and nature walk, with Dan Powers.
Stearns Lake Parking Lot.

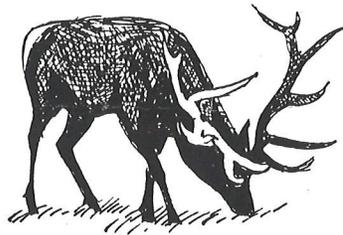
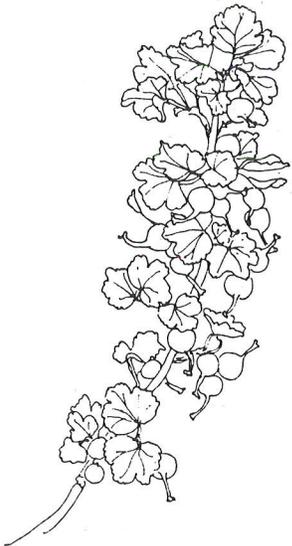
Saturday, October 24, 2-3:30 p.m. Owls, with Pascale Fried.

Wednesday, November 4, 7-8:30 p.m. Legacies of Boulder County, with Ann Dyni.
Lafayette Public Library.

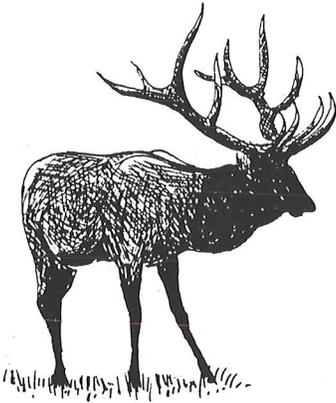
Thurs. (7-8:30 p.m.) & Sat. (9:30-1:30 p.m.), November 12 & 14.

Wintering raptors, with volunteer naturalists.

Saturday, November 21, 12:30-1:30 p.m. Life of an Elk, with Chris White.

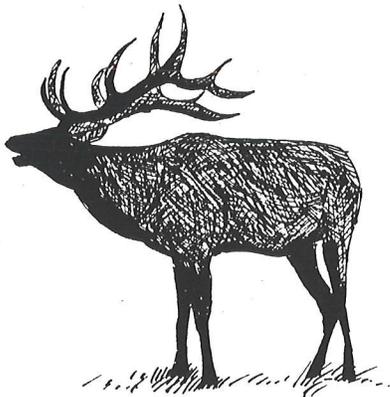


BIRDWATCHING CLASSES
Steve Jones (494-2468) is offering a field class, "Hawks, Eagles, and Falcons," through Life-long Learning this October and November.
Suzi Plooster (494-6708) will teach a Life-long Learning beginning birdwatching class during the same months.
Call these instructors for specific times and places.



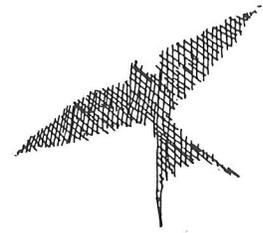
Of all the things in which I invest time, I've come to feel over the last fifteen years that the most worthy is another human who will purposefully choose what he or she is interested in, then commit the time to study it, usually with no guidance. I think this act brings into play the most unique and valuable of human attributes—the original thought, the original point of view, the original interpretation—all innocent and naive, uncolored by some professor's prior opinion, or by some obscure paragraph in some book.

From: *Back in Keith County* by John Janovy, Jr., St. Martin's Press, ISBN 0-312-06483-7. At the time of this book (1981), Janovy was a professor of biology at the University of Nebraska and one of the finest authors on the natural history of the Nebraska sandhills.





Allegra Collister Nature Area Spring 1998 Bird Banding Report



submitted by Virginia Dionigi, Tony Esposito and Joe Harrison

The Spring '98 bird banding season at ACNA ended without fanfare. After 19 days and approximately 200 plus hours of effort, no new species were banded or sighted. But, we always had high hopes. It was never humdrum! Two hundred fifty nine individuals of forty two species were captured. Yellow Warblers were the most numerous (28), followed by Lincoln's Sparrow (24) and Bullock's Oriole (23). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was the 5000th bird banded.

Yellow Warbler "119" did not return. We can only presume that he found a way around the gulch or has met his demise.

Brown-headed Cowbird "109", a female that was banded 4/27/93, returned to ACNA and was recaptured 5/27—at least 6 years old. Darn. A Mallard hen had nested only a few steps off the trail. On 5/15 we found the nest and eggs destroyed, and the remnants of the hen's carcass. Probably a meal for the coyote or fox that visit regularly.

We are sure that some readers have asked the question, "What are the bird banders trying to achieve and what are their goals?" At the end of Fall '98 banding season, we will have completed 8 years (16 seasons) of data collection at ACNA. Our goal is to complete 10 years of studies and then publish the results of our efforts. The format is as yet undetermined. We are certain it will include a presentation of detailed data, charts and graphs, some analyses and attempts at interpretation, and a few biased conclusions. Perhaps a few anecdotes of our experiences can be interspersed to add a human touch and soften the hard facts. At the very least, we would hope that others might find the information of interest, useful in some positive way, and valuable in conserving and protecting our very important feathered friends.

As a note of interest; in a recently released report ". . . , INTO THE 21ST CENTURY", both the Canadian Bird Banding Office and the U.S. Bird Banding Laboratory have committed to expand and modernize their operations. Bird banding in the 21st century will be more important than ever before.

* * * * *



The Many Names of Ochotona princeps

The American pika is sometimes called a cony, rock rabbit, little chief hare, calling hare, whistling hare or piping hare.

The name "pika" comes from the name of the animal in a northeastern Siberian tribal dialect.

The genus name "Ochotona" comes from a Mongolian name for the pika.

The species name "princeps," which means chief, refers to the fact that the Chippewa name for the pika translates as "little chief hare."

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION BOULDER COUNTY NATURE ASSOCIATION

Name _____

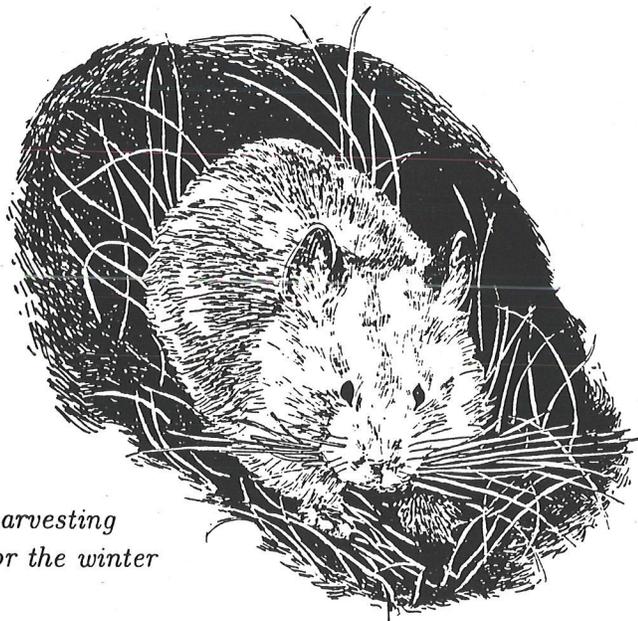
Address _____

| | |
|---|------|
| <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," 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 mfg@indra.com or send a 3.5-in. Mac or DOS disk in Word or ASCII text to Mike Figs at 2635 Mapleton Ave., #77, Boulder, CO 80304.

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



*pika harvesting
hay for the winter*