

BOULDER BIRD CLUB NEWS

<http://www.boulderbirdclub.org/>

*Sixty Years Dedicated to the
Field Observation of irds*

Apr.-May-June 2009

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

April, 2009

Signs of spring!! At our house, we know from our kitchen table. The sounds of happy birds are around us. Our normal busily eating feeder birds, but now they are making new calls. Also, a few new ones are showing up, like the Towhee of last week. The comparative silence of winter is over and the cacophony of spring bird sounds is begun. The binoculars have migrated to a spot near the deck window, within easy reach!

About 6:00 AM and the racket begins, usually the flicker with his rat a tat on the rain gutters. Not enough to get us out of bed, but enough to wake me thoroughly. Our heated bird bath carries a number of different ghostly shapes and sizes. The jays dominating with raucous calls and the flicker swooping in as the more timid Siskins and Finches and Juncoes scatter. The Robins come in groups, eager for their water. Migrations not in full swing, but its enough fun for me!

Let me remind you again, you could be taking this over next year. Give me a call.

Jim Fido

BBC ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

Friday, May 8, 2009, 7:00-9:00 pm

Golden West Manor

Bill Schmoker will speak on "**Bird Coloration and the Fascinating Case of Whitey, the Steller's Jay**" -- Bill is perhaps best known in the birding community as a leading digital photographer of birds. Since 2001 he has built a collection of bird photos documenting over 580 species of North American birds, which can be seen on his website (schmoker.org/BirdPics). His photography has appeared in many publications including Colorado Birds, Birding, WildBird, North American Birds, National Wildlife, Bird Conservation, Audubon, British Birds, Birdwatch, and Western Birds. His pictures have also been featured in photographic field guides (including The Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America), bird ID cards, newspapers, interpretive signs, web pages (including the American Birding Association's home page), advertisements, corporate logos, and as references for art works. Bill wrote a chapter for Good Birders Don't Wear White, and was a featured speaker at the 2008 American Birding Association national convention in Snowbird, UT.

DIRECTIONS: Golden West Manor is off 30th Street between Baseline and Colorado Avenue. Turn west on Euclid, which becomes Adams Circle. Park on the street or in one of the 20 spaces Golden West has rented at the First Christian Church, just west of the building. Enter the building on the east side and take the elevator up to the penthouse at **Golden West Manor, 1005 Adams Circle, Boulder.**

Please bring munchies or sweets to share, if you like. BBC will provide the beverages. See you there!



From The Editor

Spring is here along with our "not uncommon" March Blizzard! This year's Sandhill Crane trip to Nebraska which started on the first day of Spring was a success, attended by Edie Israel, Chuck and Gail Lowrie, Barbara Hoover, and Richard Dixon (from California) We were lucky to have good weather and also excellent viewing of "most uncommon" Common Crane! We were very lucky to have excellent photographers - Edie and Barbara; the Common Crane photos can be found throughout this newsletter.

Thanks for all the submissions to this newsletter-keep them coming.

Enjoy your Spring birding!

- Patricia Heller, Newsletter editor



Common Crane, photo courtesy of Barbara Hoover

From Sibley, *Bird Families of North America: Accidental Species* ... "The Common Crane (*Grus grus*) of Eurasia has been recorded in North America several times, with sightings scattered across the continent and at various times of year. Some of these birds may have migrated to North America with "Lesser" Sandhill Cranes (*G. Canadensis canadensis*) from Siberian nesting populations." - William J. Seng

DID YOU KNOW ?

Did you know that the longest running breeding bird census "ever", happened right here in Boulder, Colorado? Louise Hering (now age 87 and living at Boulder Manor Care Center), had a study plot on Enchanted Mesa. She kept records on the plot from 1956 through 1995. Some years ago, Ruth Carol Cushman and Steve Jones

summarized her work in an article in the Colorado Field Ornithologists Journal. Her work was also used in the 2001 publication of Cornell's *The Birds of North America - Life Histories of Birds: Pygmy Nuthatch*, No.567, 2001, pg 23 &31.

- Suzi Plooster

Trip Notices, Stories, Pictures and Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Richard Holmes** who had his photograph of a Mountain Bluebird used in the Daily Camera, to highlight the article by Joe Prentiss on Mountain Bluebirds on March 12, 2009. - *Suzi Plooster*

The **Audubon Society of Greater Denver** is offering a field trip, **Bird Southeast Arizona, May 1-7, 2009**. We'll visit Madera and Garden Canyons, Patagonia Lake State Park, Sonoita Creek, the San Pedro River corridor and other birding hotspots in one of the most biologically diverse areas in the U.S. Species we're likely to see include the elegant trogon, painted redstart, thick-billed kingbird, up to 10 species of hummingbirds, Grace's, Lucy's, red-faced and other warblers and many others. Outstanding birder and naturalist, Mark Pretti, will be our guide. Maximum group size is 9. Land cost is \$1595 per person double occupancy from Tucson. For an itinerary and further information, please call ASGD representative Bill Turner (who will be accompanying the trip) at (303) 795-5128.

Boulder County Parks & Open Space Bird related programs

WHO ARE THE OWLS?

Thursday March 5, 7pm to 8:30 pm - Reynolds Branch Library
Program given by Volunteer naturalists. Free

BEGINNING BIRDING

Saturday, April 25; 8 am to 10 am - Cotton Wood Marsh, Walden Wildlife Habitat. Emphasis on beginning level birdwatching with Volunteer naturalists. Bring Binoculars & field guide. Free.

A BUTTERFLY'S LIFE

Wednesday, May 13; 7 pm to 8:30 pm. - George Reynolds Library. Free. A beginners guide to butterflys program led by Cathy & Donn Cook (BBC members).

BIRDS OF BOULDER COUNTY SLIDE PROGRAMS

Wednesday April 8 7pm-8:30pm - Lafayette Publ. Library - free
Thursday May 5; 7 to 8:30 pm -- Reynolds Branch Library -free

Close Encounter of the Bird Kind *Pete Plage*

Mid April on the Front Range of Colorado brings a mix of warming days and winter's parting shots. So, a sunny and still Saturday brought the temptation of a mid-day walk to ferret out new arrivals. Stearns Lake held the seasonal potpourri including horned grebes transitioning into breeding plumage, rafts of scaup, and a sprinkling of ruddy ducks. of spring was not to be rewarded by any "First of Year" sightings this day.

A search of the cattails, thickets, and fields surrounding the lake proved decidedly disappointing: only red-winged blackbirds, song sparrows, and a few other expected residents. The siren's song of spring was not to be rewarded by any "First of Year" sightings this day.

As I walked, my mind drifted to the "to do" list on my kitchen counter. Then a single thin note from a line of junipers caught my attention. An initial search produced nothing. A few chips later my frustration began to mount. I started some soft pishing, hoping for a look. Eventually I noticed movement -- a kinglet foraging in the dense foliage. An added bonus, it was a golden-crowned kinglet, which, while not rare away from the mountains, was certainly less usual than a ruby-crowned kinglet. As I struggled to perfect my pishes, the tiny bird provided encouragement by working toward me. Eventually it paused from its hunt for insect eggs and settled on a branch about eye level, five feet away. Kinglets can be fearless, probably attesting to the fact that they are too small to make more than a mouthful for any predator. Sharp-shinned hawks have been heard to dismiss them as "all feathers." They could be the inspiration for the old ad line "where's the beef?"

This small bird proved curious and trusting, then did two things that I found endearing. First it cocked its head a bit sideways while staring at me. I read a piece recently by someone who had a dog with a neck injury. When she met strangers they perceived her to be very intelligent -- as if she showed interest and concentration by the way she tilted her head. That was my take on this kinglet. While I'm sure it was trying to get a read on the source of the sounds it was hearing, I chose to interpret it as an interest in the large human staring back. The second thing it did I was not prepared for. Slowly, the top of its head changed chameleon-like from gold to red and back again. In the bird guides male kinglets are depicted with red crowns, but other than when engaged in courtship displays, views of the red are usually fleeting. I was not so much taken by the show of red, perhaps caused by agitation over my pishing, but more in the almost magical transformation. Repeatedly the red appeared and disappeared. It made me feel as though I were staring at a sleight-of-hand artist, unable to decipher how a trick is done.

Time, which seemed to have frozen for the moment, resumed. I think I broke off contact first. Sure, I had things to do, but the bird's task of fueling up for the next chilly night was far more important. I had taken enough of his time. I left with an unexpected feeling of satisfaction, not from finding a rare species or a new seasonal arrival, but from experiencing something much more personal, a close encounter with a quarter-ounce of magical energy cloaked in feathers.

- *Pete Plage*



The "Most Uncommon (in North America)" Common Crane with a group of Lesser Sandhill Cranes outside of Llewellyn, NE
Photo courtesy of Barbara Hoover - March 2009

REMINDER! May through June
First Sunday Birding is 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

This quarter's calendar was produced by Lonny Frye.

April 5th 2008 Sunday at 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
First Sunday Birding at Walden Ponds

Meet at the Cottonwood Marsh at Walden Wildlife Habitat at 9:00 AM for shorebirds, ducks and other waterfowl and then we will explore the woods, meadows and creek areas for early Spring arrivals. This is a good chance to brush up on your dabbling duck ID skills. Everyone is welcome and beginners and experts alike will learn tips on identifying birds. Bring binoculars, scope, snack, water, mud shoes. Weather can be highly variable in early April, so dress accordingly. Hosted by Jim Fischer(303 940 3677) jayzeezed@hotmail.com Walden Ponds is mostly an accessible area.

April 26th 2009 Sunday at 8AM to Noon
Dowdy Draw Joint DFO-BBC Early Spring Migrants

Meet at 8AM at the Dowdy Draw trailhead off of highway 128 to Eldorado Canyon for a moderate hike up the newly remodeled Dowdy Draw. Led by Christian Nunes, a Boulder Open Space Wildlife Technician and expert birder, this is a joint trip with the Denver Field Ornithologist and should be a good chance to see some old friends and get warmed up for migration sights and sounds. Bring the usual protective clothing, water, snack and Binocs. Last year, Christian had a Field Sparrow from the parking lot! Christian Nunes (401 787 0194) or parajoboy@hotmail.com

May 3rd 2009 Sunday 8:00AM to 11:00AM
First Sunday Birding at Walden Ponds

Meet at the Cottonwood Marsh at Walden Wildlife Habitat at 8AM for a look at the fresh arrivals on the water and along the shores. Then walk the trails to the creek and woods finding nesting birds and migrants. One of the busiest birding First Sundays of the year should start you spring off with some 50 species. Bring binoculars, scope, snack, water, mud shoes and weather protection. Led by Peter Plage who is one of the most familiar with this wild area.
Peter Plage 720-771-7563 and at peter.plage@gmail.com

May 8th 2009 Friday
Annual Meeting of the BBC
See page 1 of newsletter for info!

May 9th 2009 Saturday Various Times, see info below
International Migratory Bird Day at Walden Ponds

The Wild Bird Center, Boulder Bird Club, and Boulder County Audubon will be hosting International Migratory Bird Day at Walden Ponds on Saturday, May 9, 2009. This year's theme is "Birds in Culture." There will be information on the conservation of wild birds as well as a Dawn Chorus Walk, A Big Sit, and other walks. The dawn chorus will begin at 5:30AM and the general events are scheduled from 7:30AM 'til 11:00AM. More details on this event will be posted as they come available at <http://wildbird.com/stores/bld/birdwalks> Or people may call (303) 442-1322 for details. Note: Please carpool to Walden Ponds as there is limited parking. Illegally parked cars may be ticketed.

May 14th 2009 Thursday Evening at 7PM
An Evening at Walden Ponds with Ted Floyd

Here is something new for the Boulder Birdclub, an evening listening tour of the Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat. Ted has two of the best ears in birding and can pick out the calls of Night Herons and Bitterns and many other birds as they settle in for the night. People often forget how active birds can be as the heat of the day dissipates, and the shadows fall over the waters and bushes. We birders should be equally as curious about their behavior at night as during the day and this is one of Ted Floyd's particular expertises. Bring some bug spray and binoculars and your ears to enjoy learning about a side of birding so often overlooked. Meet up at Cottonwood Marsh at 7 PM for a few hours of evening birding. Ted Floyd at tedfloyd@aba.org

BBC Wednesday Roadrunners

7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays - Meet at East Boulder Recreation Center. Depart 7:30 a.m. sharp. Carpool to a local area for early morning birding. Riders reimburse driving expenses. Bring binoculars, spotting scope, camera, bird-book, etc. After-birding coffee at some local coffee shop.

May

5/6, Joe Krieg, 303-651-0565 -- Bring a pot-luck dish for a kick-off get-together at the Ploosters' after the trip!

5/13, Lonny Frye, 303-931-9131

5/20, To be announced.

5/27, Bob Zilly, 303-792-6054 -- Pella Crossing, Hygiene

June

6/3, Joyce Takamine, 303-554-9785

6/10, Diane Carter, 303-427-3371

6/17, Sandy Arneson, 303-465-3353

6/24, Ann Tagawa and Jim Guerin, 303-443-8303 -- Bluebirds on Shanahan Ridge

May 17th 2009 Sunday 5:30 AM
Migrants at Chico Basin,

A Full-Day Trip with Joyce Takamine - Chico Basin is one of the best spots in the state for migrating birds and this will be our second trip there for the Boulder Bird Club. We will be looking for warblers and passerines taking some rest before heading East. For the last few years, Chico Basin has had astonishing numbers of unusual birds reported. We will also check out local water holes and lakes for activity. We will carpool from East Boulder Rec Center leaving at 5:30 AM sharp returning around 5:00 PM. Remember that 4 wheel drive vehicles are a must if recent rains leave roads muddy. Please bring sack lunch, protective clothing, good hiking shoes and sunscreen, and money for both carpool and the \$10.00 per person admission fee. This will be one of our most interesting trips with excellent birders for guides. There will be more specific information available about this trip later, so please contact Joyce prior to trip at jabiru55@msn.com or at 303 554-9785.

May 22nd through the 25th 2009
Colorado Field Ornithologists Convention in Alamosa

Should be a nice convention this year, topped off by Boulder's own author, editor, and birder extraordinaire, Ted Floyd giving the keynote address. The information can be found at http://cfo-link.org/downloads/CFO_Conv_09.pdf

May 30th 2009 Saturday 6:00 AM - around 6pm
The Birds of the Pawnee Grasslands

Join master birder Bill Kaempfer for his notable annual trip to the Pawnee. He is able to find those elusive grasslands birds such as Mountain Plovers, Longspurs, Burrowing Owls, Orchard Orioles and Nighthawks. Other birding treats are possible, too, including late shorebird and songbird migrants. Meet at 6 a.m. sharp to form car pools at the Niwot Park N Ride at Co 119 and Niwot Road Alternatively, if you are coming from afar or wish to try camping at Crow Valley Campground (reservation suggested and fee required) join the group between 8:00 and 8:30 at Crow Valley. Return home either via Lower Latham or Wellington SWA depending on how the birds lead us, getting back around 6 p.m. A full day so be prepared with lots to drink, snacks, lunch, hat, bug repellent, sun screen and binocular. Scope and radios if you have them. A great trip that every birder needs to take and it will be far superior than if you try to find these birds yourself. Sign up in advance. Leader: Bill Kaempfer 303-954-8998 or email kaempfer@colorado.edu

PLEASE SAVE YOUR NEWSLETTER AS A FUTURE RESOURCE FOR TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES.

June 6th 2009 Saturday 8:30AM to 1:30PM
Birding canyons and hills of Lyons with Raymond Davis

Meet at the Lyons Park'n'Ride(4th and Main) at 8:30 and we will bird Old South Rd for breeding Canyon Wren, Cordilleran Flycatcher, White-throated Swift, etc. Then head up to the Davis porch for sack lunch and observation of his 3 dozen nesting boxes and feeders. We can help him inventory where the bluebirds, wrens, swallows, woodpeckers, and others are nesting. Be done by 1:30 or so. Bring your lunch and water and be prepared for an easy walk and a nice morning with a greathost. Davis at 303 823 5332 or davis@greenspeedisp.net

June 7th 2009 Sunday 8:00AM to 11:00AM
First Sunday Birding at Walden Ponds

Meet up at the Cottonwood Marsh at Walden Wildlife Habitat at 8 AM and scan the ponds and wetlands for shorebirds ducks, and other waterfowl. Then explore the woods, meadows and creeks for nesting birds. Everyone is welcome and Walden Ponds is mostly accessible. Bring water, snack, binoculars and sun/rain gear. This trip will be led by Joyce Takamine 303 554 9785 or jabiru55@msn.com
June 20th 2009 Saturday 8:00AM to early afternoon
A Blue Flutters Walk

Western and Mountain Bluebirds, Blue Butterflies Azures and Silvery Blues fly at the Cal-Wood Education Center, Jamestown. Spring moisture will bring the blossoms and insects plenty to eat for the bluebirds. We are having this enjoyable bird walk somewhat later to take advantage of the plethora of butterflies in early summer. Of course, birdwatching will be equally encouraged as we hike down towards the cool stream. Bring a butterfly guide if you have one, binoculars, sun and rain protection, lunch and water. Meet at 8:00 AM at the Safeway Store, north parking lot Iris and 28th Street to carpool. The drive is about 50 minutes each way. Cal-Wood is a 1,000 acre montane meadow and ponderosa pine forest which is preserved with a Conservation Easement, so it is isolated, unique and protected. Young people are welcome. Leave Cal-Wood, by 1:00 PM. Leader: Jan Chu 303-494-1108 or email at chuhouse@hotmail.com

June 27th Saturday 2009 8:00 AM to 1:30 PM
The Flagstaff Mountain Picnic and Birdwalk at Julie Hammerstrom's House.

Julie Hammerstrom will again host this special summer birdwalk and get together at her home at the top of Flagstaff Mountain. A great time to meet and visit with other members. Nesting birds, flycatchers, bluebirds, hummers, chickadees, maybe turkeys and more. Bring your own picnic lunch. Meet at East Boulder Rec Center, West end of parking lot at 8 AM sharp to carpool to Julies. Those with walking impairment will enjoy birding around the house and picnic area. Everyone is encouraged to attend. Return around 1- 1:30. Leader: Jim Eide, 303-443-6236.

June 27th Saturday 2009
Roll and Stroll White Rocks Trail

Boulder Audubon and City of Boulder Of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks sponsored bird trip for anyone, especially those with strollers, walkers, wheelchairs etc. Further information on this and other fine walks by the Boulder County Audubon: <http://boulderaudubon.org/trips.htm>

Friday, July 3 to Sunday, July 5 2009
North Park – Joint Trip With DFO

Leader: Chuck Lowrie, (303) 455-8417 - Meet at Safeway parking lot on east side of U.S. 40 in Fraser at 0900 on Friday morning. (Fraser is a 2 hour drive from Boulder.) Make reservations for Friday & Saturday nights in Walden at the North Park.

Paula Hansley is to lead a trip on **July 4** to Golden Gate Park: details in the Summer schedule or redstart.paula@gmail.com.

The Boulder Bird Club welcomes birders of all abilities and ages on our field trips. Children under 16 should be accompanied by an adult. Come and join us!

Field Trip Coordinator: Lonny Frye (303-931-9131).
Contact trip leaders for information on their trips. Our weather is unpredictable. For questions about details or whether the trip will take place, contact the trip leader.

Trip Sign-Up Sheets and Participant Responsibility: Everyone who attends a BBC trip MUST sign the sign-up sheet before being allowed on the trip. By signing the sheet and/or participating in the trip, each person declares that he/she is solely responsible for his/her safety, and in no way will hold the Club, trip leader, or any participating person responsible for his/her safety. Sign in every time. Anyone under age 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Carpooling On Trips: Please pay your carpooling fee up front to the driver at the start of the trip. At the end of trips we often forget. Have the exact amount and don't wait for driver to ask you for it. JUST DO IT.

BBC Scope/Radios: The BBC scope and two-way radios are available for leaders. Call Jim Eide (303-443-6236).

BBC MEMBERSHIP AND DUES: We invite you to join the Boulder Bird Club. Membership is \$8.00 per year for all persons at one address. Bird family members are free. As our dues are so minimal, no partial-year memberships are available. Members receive our quarterly newsletter, 10% discount on merchandise (5% on optics) from the Wild Bird Center, 10% discount from Wild Birds Unlimited, and the opportunity to take part in over 50 field trips each year. Send your check with completed membership form to Janet Chu, 964 Ravenwood Road, Boulder, CO 80303.



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: This newsletter is published four times a year. We welcome articles, pictures, and news of your birding activities. Deadline for the July, August, September issue is June 24, 2009. Send your contributions to Pat Heller, 2155 Dogwood Circle, Louisville, Co. 80027, 303-604-1163 (leave message), or pat_heller@msn.com.



ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER CHANGES: Please send all address and phone number changes (or problems with your subscription, etc.) to Janet Chu, 964 Ravenwood Rd., Boulder, CO 80303, phone 303-494-1108, or e-mail chuhouse@hotmail.com

On **May 31st** the **Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory** (www.rmbo.org) will be hosting an **International Migratory Bird Day** (IMBD) celebration for families at Chautauqua. Boulder Bird Club members are welcome. We would appreciate members volunteering to help, in the following areas:

1. Leading bird walks: We could really use your birding and local expertise here! These walks will be for beginners and families.
2. Booths: There will be table space available inside to highlight the partnering organizations (RMBO, BBC and potentially Boulder Audubon).
3. Activities: These will be inside and outside from 9-12. So far we are planning on making feeders, doing a craft, having a migration game, having a station to learn about birds through investigating taxidermy.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact **Kacie Ehrenberger** at Kacie.ehrenberger@rmbo.org or **303-659-4348 ext 16** as soon as possible