



Duck Stamps: Art with a Purpose

The purchase of a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, more simply known as a "Duck Stamp," is one of the best ways you can promote wetlands conservation. Since its inception in 1934 as a federal license for hunting migratory waterfowl, this program has generated over \$670,000,000 used to purchase or lease 5.2 million acres of waterfowl habitat that is now included in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The stamps are only \$15, and 98% of that is used for habitat preservation! With a decline in the number of hunters, it is more important than ever that conservationists, and especially birders, purchase Duck Stamps.

As a bonus, having the current year's stamp allows you free access to any National Wildlife Refuge, many of which now charge admission fees.



The first Federal Duck Stamp, featuring a pair of Mallards, was designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling.

There's another benefit to purchasing and saving these stamps. Each fall the Fish and Wildlife Service sponsors a stamp-design contest. The winning design is submitted to the U.S. Postal Service for production of the coming year's stamp. (The stamps are not valid for postage.)

With such high quality artwork, the stamps have become profitable collector's items. The total face value of the 73 stamps issued to date is about \$400. However, this investment today would be worth well over \$5,000!

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Here we are at the end of another busy Aiken Audubon Society "year". With so much accomplished, I'd like to take this opportunity to recall some of the things we've done in the past months.

When you read this newsletter we will be getting ready for our eighth and final program: a book signing with several authors and photographers. In previous months we've encountered owls and bats, re-visited Flammulated Owl research and traveled to the Galápagos Islands. In lieu of a general meeting in December, we participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count, which was once again very successful.

Numerous field trips have provided plenty of opportunities for birding throughout El Paso County and elsewhere. Redwing Sanctuary is still available for birding and is an oasis in the city.

We are actively participating in many different conservation projects at the local and state level.

We hosted a special meeting to inform birders how they can participate in updating the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas. The entire state of Colorado needs to be monitored, so you can imagine the number of volunteers and volunteer hours required for this daunting task. We are in our second year of the Colorado Springs Bluebird Project. As with any new project, the CSBP has had some growing pains, but with a new chairperson we should have a great Bluebird breeding season.

We continue to publish a wonderful newsletter and have a newly re-vamped website. They provide information on birding, both in El Paso county and elsewhere, and each has links to other "birdy" websites. A variety of classroom presentations has inspired a new generation of birders.

Partnering with other local groups, we awarded an education grant to the Ellicot Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and donated funds to support the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory's bird banding efforts

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DATES TO REMEMBER

May 16

Program: Meet the Authors

June - August

No meetings; check website for fieldtrips!

September 19

Fall kickoff meeting

Newsletter Articles

Items and announcements of special interest to Aiken Audubon members are welcomed for publication in this newsletter.

Deadline for the September/October 2007 issue is Wednesday, August 15.

Contact the editor, Leslie Holzmann
leslie@icta.net, 719.495.8889

May 16 Meet the Authors

Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to meet these authors and photographers. Come hear about their work, and then chat with those who catch your interest. They will be available to autograph their books and answer your questions. This will be a relaxed evening, complete with coffee and hors d'oeuvres.



Mary Taylor Young

Best-selling nature writer Mary Taylor Young spent her childhood summers roaming the Colorado Rockies from her grandparents' cabin in Estes Park. She recalls waking to mule deer peering in the windows and hummingbirds buzzing the red-trimmed feeders. Her love of Colorado led to a degree in Zoology from Colorado State University and a life devoted to nature and the environment. Mary is author of nine books, including *The Guide to Colorado Birds*, *Land of Grass and Sky: A Naturalist's Prairie Journey* and *On the Trail of Colorado Critters: Wildlife Watching For Kids*. Many Coloradans know Mary from her "Words on Birds" column, which has appeared monthly in the Rocky Mountain News since 1993. Mary has written extensively for the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado State Parks, US Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies and groups.

For more information: www.MaryTaylorYoung.com



Mic Clinger

Mic Clinger's photography is presented in the recently released book, *Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park: Then & Now*. A stunning arrangement of historic photographs of Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park is paired with present-day photographs of the same locations. Mic diligently rephotographed each historic picture from its identical location so that the visual impact of time and progress emerges with every page. Discover what Estes Park Village and its many historical structures looked like in the towns early years and see the changes that have occurred. Learn about the beginning of Rocky Mountain National Park and its extensive transformations throughout time. Mic is a long time Parker resident and is an avid photographer and climber.



Pamela & David Irwin

Author Pamela Irwin has been a volunteer naturalist at Roxborough State Park since the early 1980s. Her extensive background in and love of wildflower identification has earned her the certified title of Native Plant Master from Colorado State University. Pamela is also a member of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the American Rock Garden Society, Windflowers Garden Club, and the Audubon Society.

Photographer David Irwin purchased his first 35 mm SLR camera as a teenager and has been behind a lens ever since. His favorite subjects include people of foreign lands, the remnants of past civilizations, and the textures of western terrains.

Avid hikers, Pamela and David enjoy combining their talents to produce beautiful hiking guidebooks to their home state. Previous collaborations include *Colorado's Best Wildflower Hikes, Volumes 1 (The Front Range) & 2 (The High Country)*, and *100 Best Day Hikes: Denver Area & Front Range*. The Irwins also maintain an extensive slide library and have given slide-illustrated talks for various organizations. Additionally, many of David's photographs and Pamela's watercolors are now in private collections.

Aiken Audubon meetings are held at the Colorado State Division of Wildlife building located at 4255 Sinton Road. Coffee and socializing is at 6:30pm and programs begin at 7:00pm. Please use the back entrance. Note: Sinton Road runs parallel to I-25 on the east side, between Garden of the Gods Road and Fillmore Street.

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719.635.1716

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719.531.7076



Everyone is welcome on Aiken field trips, regardless of experience level or membership in Audubon. Please contact trip leader for more information and to let them know you are coming. *Current field trip information is available online at www.aikenaudubonsociety.org.*

Saturday, May 12

Bird Banding at Chico Basin

This is an excellent opportunity to join the RMBO at their Chico Basin Ranch banding station and perhaps get a good look at some uncommon migrants. Meet at 8 am at Sears Southgate to carpool, or be at the banding station at 8:30. There is a \$10/person "voluntary donation" to the ranch for birding on the premises.

Directions: From I-25 take Exit 122. Go east on Old Pueblo Road (over the railroad tracks) ~ 1.5 miles to Hanover Road. Turn right and proceed east ~ 13 miles to Peyton Highway. Turn right and head south to the main gate. (Heading south on Peyton Highway, just past the fire station, scan the prairie dog colony to the west for Mountain Plover. At least one pair is breeding there this year.) Head south into the ranch for about a mile until you see a dancing cowboy sign, turn sharp right and proceed about mile to the banding station around a large cottonwood grove and homestead.

TRIP LEADER:

John Drummond 719.488.3700

Saturday – Sunday, May 12 – 13

Pawnee Buttes

Join Aiken for our annual trek to the prairies of northeastern Colorado. The plan is to leave the Woodman Park & Ride at 6 am on Saturday, May 12, camp at Crow Valley campground and return on Sunday, May 13. Motels are available nearby for those who do not wish to camp. This trip always produces great birds.

TRIP LEADER:

Steve Vaughan 719.531.7076

Saturday, May 26

Manitou Lake

Meet at 7:30 am in the Red Rocks Safeway parking lot (W. Colorado Ave. at 32nd St.) to carpool for this half-day trip. The state park charges a \$5 entrance fee per vehicle. Come enjoy the birds and the scenery.

TRIP LEADER:

Allan Burns 719.632.2081

Saturday, June 23

Red Rock housing area

Travel south of Colorado Springs for a morning of great birding along Hwy. 115 between Ft. Carson and Aiken Canyon. We will be walking a couple of miles along the streets of a rural subdivision to the west of the highway, and visiting a private home where there are numerous feeders. Meet at Sears Southgate at 8 am to carpool.

TRIP LEADER:

Dodie Hiatt 719.635.3769

Saturday, May 5, 7am – 10am

Annual Spring Bird Count at Bear Creek

Calling birders of all ages and abilities! We need your help to identify and count the feathered friends within Bear Creek Park. We'll divide into teams, and share results at the end. Bagles, coffee and orange juice will be provided.

Free, call 719.520.6387 for reservations.

Saturday, May 12, 7am – 11am

Annual Spring Bird Count at Fountain Creek

Beginning to advanced birders are invited to join the staff at Fountain Creek Nature Center for a morning of birding fun as we conduct our annual spring survey of bird species and numbers within the park.

Free, call 719. 520.6745 for reservations.

To learn more about both nature centers:

Programming information, maps, and more can be found at www.elpasoco.com/parks

BEGINNING BIRDING

Birding Resources—

Where do you go from here?

Aiken Audubon's programs and newsletter will take a summer recess, but there are many ways to continue your education as a fledgling birder. Here are a few suggestions:

Any trip to the library will provide plenty of reading material. Here's three of my favorites books that explain how to be a birdwatcher. They are all informative and fun to read:

- *Pete Dunne on Bird Watching: The How-to, Where-to, and When-to of Birding*
- *Sibley's Birding Basics*
- *Bird Watching for Dummies*, by Bill Thompson III

The proliferation of birding websites can be overwhelming. To start you out, here are several places to keep abreast of Colorado birding:

- Colorado Field Ornithologists—www.cfo-link.org
- Denver Field Ornithologists—www.dfobirders.org
- Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory—www.rmbo.org/
- Colorado Birding Trail—www.coloradobirdingtrail.com/
- Colorado Birding—<http://coloradobirding.ning.com/>
- Colorado Birding Society—<http://home.att.net/~birdertoo/>

If you plan any summer travel, be sure to look online for information about hotspots near your destination and what you are likely to see there. Learning the birds before you go avoids considerable frustration, and maximizes limited opportunities to add to your life list. Google

June 21 – 25, 2007

Special Sage-Grouse Monitoring Rendezvous

Audubon Colorado's Annual State Rendezvous
To Be Held During the Same Period

Please mark your calendar and plan to join Audubon members from all around the state for a brand new event: the Gunnison Sage-Grouse (GUSG) Monitoring Rendezvous. All chapter members are invited and encouraged to attend. The gathering will take place from Thursday June 21st through Monday June 25th, but individuals may join us for any combination of days that fits into their schedules. Audubon volunteers will gather in Gunnison to work with federal biologists and faculty from Western State College to help monitor the condition of BLM riparian habitats that are used by GUSG during the early summer. This is an exciting opportunity to make a serious on-the-ground contribution to GUSG conservation in Colorado.

The idea for the Monitoring Rendezvous grew out of the GUSG Chapter Collaborative Project in which all the chapters in the state are participating. The BLM staff need to maintain healthy habitats on public lands in the Gunnison Basin, which is a Globally Important Bird Area for the largest population of GUSG. It is difficult for BLM biologists to thoroughly cover all of the land, and they are welcoming our offer to help them in this important work. On each day during the 5-day period we will assemble 2- or 3-person teams to work for 3 or 4 hours in different BLM riparian areas. Participants will be provided with maps and data sheets and will be trained to use a GPS unit and to take basic vegetation measurements of habitat quality. BLM is especially interested in our observations of birds and other wildlife and in our comments—as birders—on the general condition of the land as habitat for GUSG and other birds. Participants who have digital cameras will be encouraged to make photo documentation of the habitats. Since this is the period of brood-rearing for GUSG, there's always the possibility that you may see a grouse hen and her chicks. This will be a truly unique and rewarding wildlife experience.

Beginning on Friday evening (6/22) during the period of the Monitoring Rendezvous, Audubon Colorado will also kick off its 4th annual State Rendezvous in Gunnison, with a reception and speakers on the Western State campus. During the day on Saturday, the monitoring activities will continue. Then on Saturday afternoon and evening we will round out the State Rendezvous with special presentations and opportunities for discussion among chapter members from around the state. Throughout the 2-day State Rendezvous and the overlapping 5-day Monitoring Rendezvous, we will also provide plenty of opportunities for birdwatching in the Gunnison area. Evening programs on sage-grouse, related habitat issues, the local ranching community, and other topics of interest to Audubon members will be presented throughout the Rendezvous.

While we are giving participants the opportunity to be in the field for up to five days, we want to make it clear that the amount of field study you do is completely optional. Just one day in the field will bring enormous benefits. And if field study is not an option for you, we still hope you will join us for the State Rendezvous activities and any of the evening programs and birdwalks.

Please check the website at www.auduboncolorado.org for details about speakers and programs, as well as registration forms and lodging information as it becomes available. There are numerous motel and camping choices in the Gunnison area, so think about planning a family vacation around the Rendezvous this year. It will be a lot of fun for all.

• RICHARD STROMP

More information: Contact Audubon Colorado at 303.415.0130 or rstromp@audubon.org



Gunnison Sage Grouse

PHOTO © US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Want up-to-the-minute conservation news?

Want to do something for the birds? Since environmental issues usually come up quickly and call for a rapid response, we find it's not always helpful to put specifics in a bi-monthly newsletter. There's too long a lag time! So, if you'd like a more timely guide to bird conservation issues, please subscribe to our e-conservation tree: Send a message to Sandra McNew, Conservation Chair, at sandramcnew@aol.com. Put "e-conservation tree" in the subject line, and we'll get conservation information to you quickly enough to do the most good for the birds and the environment. Thanks.

• SANDRA MCNEW

Man has been endowed with reason,
with the power to create, so that
he can add to what he's been
given. But up to now he hasn't
been a creator, only a destroyer.
Forests keep disappearing,
rivers dry up, wild life's become
extinct, the climate's ruined and
the land grows poorer and uglier
every day.

• ANTON CHEKHOV,
UNCLE VANYA, 1897

The Junior Duck Stamp program was signed into law in 1994. Its purpose is to support environmental education. Thousands of students in grades K-12 create and submit artwork depicting a duck, swan or goose.



The 2005 Colorado Waterfowl Stamp, by artist Jeffrey Klinefelter.

Winning designs are widely exhibited at places such as state fairs, art galleries, and wildlife refuges. This helps inform the public about the value of wetlands and the wildlife they support. All proceeds from sales of the \$5 stamp are used for conservation awards and scholarships to the participants.

Colorado instituted its own Waterfowl Stamp Program in 1989. In addition to the federal stamp and a small game hunting license, Colorado requires anyone 16 year or older to purchase a Waterfowl Stamp, costing \$5, in order to hunt migratory ducks, swans and geese. To date, approximately \$6.7 million has been raised through stamp sales, contributing to the protection of 19,500 acres of Colorado wetlands. This is a wonderful opportunity for local birders to participate in the preservation of local birding habitat.

• BY LESLIE HOLZMANN

Both Federal Duck Stamps and Colorado Waterfowl Stamps are valid from July 1 to June 30 of each year. They may be purchased wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold. Federal stamps may also be purchased at the post office, by calling 800.852.4897, or by going to www.duckstamp.com.

at Chico Basin Ranch. We are also offering a rebate to Aiken members who take and complete the Beginning Birding Class at Fountain Creek Nature Center.

These are just some examples highlighting the activities, programs, and involvement of Aiken Audubon. I want to thank the many people who helped make this another successful year. There are still opportunities available if anyone is interested in helping. Check the website over the summer for new field trip possibilities. I will see you at the September meeting.

Keep on birding,

Risë

• RISË FOSTER-BRUDER
PRESIDENT, AIKEN AUDUBON SOCIETY

RESOURCES (CONT'D FROM PAGE 3)

will get you started, but be sure to check out www.birding.com as well.

Finally, there are several local opportunities to improve your birding skills. Consider taking the Beginning Birding classes offered each spring and fall by Ken Pals at Fountain Creek Nature Center. Guided birding trips are a wonderful way to learn from experts. Upcoming Aiken trips are listed on page 3. Be sure to check www.aikenaudubon.org frequently for any new postings. Additional field trips are sponsored by the organizations listed above, and are listed on their respective websites. Don't just sit there, go birding!

• BY LESLIE HOLZMANN

BIRDING THE PIKES PEAK AREA

Aiken Canyon Preserve

The Aiken Canyon Preserve was named after naturalist Charles Aiken, who lived in the canyon over 130 years ago. Today, his ranch is gone, and almost five miles of trail wind through over 1,600 acres of unspoiled foothills. The variety of terrain includes shrublands, tall grass prairie, pinyon juniper woodlands and mixed coniferous forest.

The preserve supports over 100 species of birds. Last year's sightings included Ash-throated Flycatcher, Red-naped Sapsucker, Canyon Wren, Northern Pygmy Owl, and Clark's Nutcracker.

Maintained by the Nature Conservancy, the canyon trails are open Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, dawn to dusk. The Visitor Center is open Memorial Day to Labor Day on Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 10am – 3pm. During the rest of the year, it's only open on Sunday from 10am – 3pm.

To reach the preserve, take the South Academy exit (135) off I-25, go west to Hwy. 115, and then south 11.5 miles to Turkey Canyon Ranch Road (just past mile marker 32). Turn right. The parking lot is almost immediately on the right.

Be sure to wear sturdy hiking boots (there may be rattlesnakes), bring water, and come prepared for rapid changes in the weather. Be aware that mountain lions, bobcats and bears also make their homes in the area.

• BY LESLIE HOLZMANN

More information: www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/colorado/preserves/art517.html

Aiken Canyon makes a perfect
Spring birding destination.



PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN



Aiken Audubon Society
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CHECK YOUR MAILING
LABEL TO SEE IF YOUR
SUBSCRIPTION IS EXPIRING!

President Risë Foster-Bruder
719.282.7877

www.aikenaudubonsociety.org

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO PARTICIPATE IN AIKEN'S ACTIVITIES

Diving Mergansers

Susan Craig, Copyright 2006



Susan Craig painted this incredible illustration of a pair of diving Hooded Mergansers, and entered it in the annual Colorado Waterfowl Art contest. Although another painting was selected for the stamp, we think this is a wonderful picture, and worthy of publication.

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Aiken Audubon Society Membership/Subscription

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