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aikorns
AIKEN AUDUBON SOCIETY

THE ISLANDS OF ALOHA— O'AHU & MAUI

Story & photos by Mel Goff

O'ahu (the Gathering Place) and Maui (the Valley Isle) are the two busiest islands in Hawai'i. O'ahu is the home of the state capital, Honolulu and its busy port and international airport. It has the state's only freeways, and with one million residents O'ahu boasts 70% of the state's population. Maui has 11% of the state's population and has agriculture and information technology as its two leading industries behind tourism. Water activities abound on both islands, and a visit to Pearl Harbor to see the USS Arizona Memorial should be on every American's bucket list.

With so much to see and do on O'ahu and Maui, I have chosen our very favorite birding hotspots to share in this issue.

O'AHU

JAMES CAMPBELL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Although closed during the breeding season (February to August), the refuge is an important site for wintering birds and breeding island residents. Here you can add Bristle-thighed Curlew, Hawaiian Coot, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and Hawaiian Duck to your life list. Rarities that have been recorded in recent years include Terek Sandpiper, Garganey, and Tufted Duck. The refuge had guided tours available on Saturday mornings. Call for details.

LYON ARBORETUM AND WAIMEA VALLEY AUDUBON CENTER

Lyon Arboretum is found in Mānoa Valley above Honolulu. Its 194 acres have over 5,000 tropical plant species. Daily showers seem to be the rule, but last only a short

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L'iwi, the 2018 ABA Bird of the Year!

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

"EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED"

Greetings from Bangkok, Thailand. I am penning this in a Bangkokian [is that a word?] hotel room. We head south tomorrow into heat and humidity, in an attempt to get 63 more birds. "Expect the Unexpected" has been the motto of the trip because nothing is what it seems. For example, you read the menu (most have English subtitles), and see the picture of what you ordered, but the dish you receive is nothing like you expected. Hopefully it's the correct meat you wanted—but sometimes it's not.

Oh the stories I can tell.

But back to Aiken. I hope you enjoyed the annual Death by Chocolate last month. The 2018 Pikes

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Coming programs

MARCH 21

Color Banding of Brown-capped Rosy-finches
Luke George

APRIL 16

The Magic of Moths
Eric Eaton

MAY 18

One Finch, Two Finch: A short history of counting birds in the United States
Clark Jones

Newsletter articles

Articles, announcements, or other items of special interest to Aiken Audubon members are welcome for consideration. We'd love to hear from you!

Note: The deadline for submissions to the May/Summer 2018 issue of the *Aikorns* is Wednesday, April 18.

Contact the editor, Leslie Holzmänn, at aikenaudubon@gmail.com or call (719) 964-3197.

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MARCH 21/ LUKE GEORGE COLOR BANDING OF BROWN- CAPPED ROSY-FINCHES

Brown-capped Rosy Finches (*Leucosticte australis*) nest at higher elevations than any other bird species in the United States, and their breeding distribution is almost entirely limited to Colorado. They spend most of the year well above tree line, feeding on seeds and insects on snow fields and in short tundra vegetation moving to lower elevations for short periods during winter storms.

Despite residing in an almost pristine environment for most of the year, Brown-capped Rosy Finches have declined by as much as 95% over the past 50 years and, unfortunately, we don't know why. The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, as part of an extensive partnership, is initiating a research program to better understand the causes of their decline. Luke will summarize the little information we currently know about rosy finches and the plans for future research.



Luke has spent a lifetime studying birds across North America, from his earliest college days until he became a faculty member in the Wildlife Department at Humboldt State University. He taught there for 21 years before moving into the Science Director position at the Bird Conservancy. His research has focused on songbird ecology, demography, habitat selection, and conservation. He has authored more than 75 scientific papers and technical reports on wildlife research and natural resource conservation and management.

APRIL 18 / ERIC EATON THE MAGIC OF MOTHS

Most people think of moths as the drab nocturnal counterpart to butterflies, if not pests that eat our crops, gardens, even what we have in the pantry or clothes closet. Prepare to have those myths shattered and replaced with astonishing revelations about what moths are really like. We have a stunning diversity of moths in Colorado, and we are discovering new county records all the time. You will be rushing home from our presentation to turn on your porch lights in hopes of seeing live moths for yourselves.

Eric R. Eaton is chairman of the board of directors for Mile High Bug Club, an organization that holds local events for National Moth Week. July's festivities can't come soon enough! He is also the principal author of the Kaufman Field Guide to Insects of North America. He has also been published in *Birds & Blooms*, *Ranger Rick*, *Missouri Conservationist*, *Orion*, and other popular journals.



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PLEASE NOTE OUR CURRENT LOCATION:

Aiken Audubon programs are free and open to the public. They are currently held at Bear Creek Nature Center, located at 245 Bear Creek Road in Colorado Springs, 80906. Coffee and socializing is at 6:30 pm and programs begin at 7 pm.

Aiken Audubon Field Trips & Events

Everyone is welcome on Aiken field trips, regardless of experience level or membership in Audubon. Contact trip leader for details and to let them know you are coming. Remember to pack your binoculars, scope (if you have one), field guide, water, snack or lunch, hat, rain gear, sun screen, bug spray, camera(?), and some gas money for the drivers. No dogs are allowed.

Note: In cases of extreme weather, trips may be cancelled. If this might be a possibility, please contact the trip leader an hour before the scheduled meeting time. To receive e-mailed reminders of upcoming field trips and notices of last-minute cancellations, send your name and e-mail address to AikenAudubon@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 8:15 AM – NOON LINCOLN MOUNTAIN

Lincoln Mountain is an Open Space in Douglas County, just a little north of Black Forest, and south of Castlewood Canyon State Park. It has about 9 miles of trail. Let's go look for some signs of spring along Cherry Creek!

Habitat ranges from a little bit of riparian along the creek to loose conifer forest in the bluffs, scrub oak on the forest edges and hill sides, and prairie in the valley and mountain top. The trail system has two 4 to 4.5 mile loops, and is relatively new and in good shape. If we get precipitation before the hike, mud and/or ice is possible. Consider this a moderate nature hike more than a birding trip—we'll enjoy the views and look for birds along the way. Expect to hike at least four miles, with an option for more if interested.

Here is a link to the current bird list: <http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L3795590>.

Contact trip leader Diana Beatty at otowi33.33@gmail.com to reserve a spot or with questions. Trip is limited to 12 participants.

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 5 – 7 PM BLUEBIRD MONITORING TRAINING

Do bluebirds make you happy? Learn how to monitor bluebird trails and nest boxes. The class will cover data collection and protocol. Possible teams and future work days will also be discussed. More volunteers are needed, and everyone is welcome.

This class is sponsored by the Colorado Department of Parks & Wildlife. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Jena Sanchez, jena.sanchez@state.co.us, for location and with any questions.



SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 7 AM – 1:30 PM BEAVER CREEK SWA

Beaver Creek State Wildlife Area is a 2,200+ acre parcel of land in northeastern Fremont County. It is characterized by piñon-juniper woodland, mixed conifer forest, and dramatic canyons. Although we will primarily be birding on trails, expect to hike over difficult terrain. This will be a strenuous trip, but the scenery is worth it. Expect to find birds typical for late winter in the Pikes Peak foothills,

montane forest, arid scrubland, and riparian habitats. Possible species include Western and Mountain Bluebirds, Bewick's and Canyon Wrens, Juniper Titmouse, Canyon and Spotted Towhees, Golden Eagle, and up to seven woodpecker species and nine Corvid species.

Meet in the SW corner of the Safeway parking lot at 6520 S. Academy. We will carpool from there. Limited to 10 participants. Contact trip leader Tyler Stuart, tylerhstuart@gmail.com, with questions and to sign up

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 7/7:30 (SEE BELOW) – 11:30 AM AIKEN CANYON PRESERVE

Aiken Canyon Preserve is a Nature Conservancy-managed property. It is named after Charles Aiken, our chapter's namesake. Habitat consists of top quality piñon/juniper scrublands with islands of Ponderosa pine and spruce/fir in the upper canyon. Possible species include Ash-Throated Flycatcher, Juniper Titmouse, various jays, and all Colorado species of nuthatch and chickadee. It is a beautiful hike into the canyon.



Expect a four mile hike over uneven hilly terrain; it will be moderately strenuous.

Meet at Broadmoor Town Center near Affordable Dentures at 7 am, or at Aiken Canyon Preserve parking lot at 7:30 am. Parking lot is 16 miles south of Lake Ave. off Hwy 115, 3350 Turkey Canon Ranch Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80926. Turn right off Hwy 115 across from the Turkey Creek Recreation site on Ft. Carson.

Contact trip leader Gary Conover at garyl1gc@yahoo.com or 635-2505 with questions or to sign up. Limited to 15 participants.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, TIMES IN BLURB CHICO BASIN RANCH

Join John Drummond as he looks for spring migrants that use Chico Basin Ranch as a stopping point on their journey north. Almost any type of warbler is possible. There will be bird banding in progress. This is a scouting trip for John's trip with the Pikes Peak Birding & Nature Festival that weekend.

A 4WD vehicle is recommended if the roads are wet. Be sure to bring lunch, water, and sun protection.

Meet at 6:45 am at the Tejon Park & Ride, or 7:30 am at Hanover Fire Station. Limited to 15 participants. This is always a popular trip and fills up quickly. There is a \$10 fee per person for groups of 5 or more. Contact John Drummond at jxdrummo@aol.com with questions and/or to sign up. This trip will fill quickly!

More trips online!

For the latest information on field trips and events:

www.AikenAudubon.com

HWY 115 PROPOSED QUARRY UPDATE

THE HITCH RACK RANCH QUARRY SAGA continues.

A boost for the opposition recently came in the form of Bill Hybl, chairman and CEO of the El Pomar Foundation. Mr. Hybl, as well as the foundation, are opposed to the proposed quarry due to their stake in a property adjacent to the ranch and the Aiken Canyon Preserve. As the Colorado Business Journal (CSBJ) stated on Dec. 29, "Hybl's opposition to the quarry project is partially driven by El Pomar's involvement with the Harold Ingersoll estate. Ingersoll's 2015 will provides that the Ingersoll Ranch be deeded to the Foundation and preserved as undeveloped land. The ranch, together with Audubon Colorado's (sic) Aiken Canyon [P]reserve and the Hitch Rack Ranch, are said to constitute an intact and irreplaceable Front Range ecosystem."

(NOTE: though CSBJ has been alerted to the fact that the state actually owns the Aiken Canyon Preserve, and leases it to The Nature Conservancy, they continue to misrepresent ownership of the property. Aiken Audubon and Audubon Rockies are opposed to the quarry.)

As to the detrimental impacts of a new quarry, Hybl says, any new quarry will be here for 100 years. And he claims that there's no shortage of aggregate with three quarries already operating along Hwy 115.

Additionally, Transit Mix Concrete has filed suit against the earlier Mining and Land Reclamation Board decision with the District Court in Denver. At this point the normal course of briefing is concluded. Judge Buchanan may choose to hear oral argument from the attorneys before issuing a decision in the case.

To engage more fully, please join the Hwy. 115 Citizens' Advisory Committee for their next meeting: Monday, March 5 at 6:30 p.m., at the Weller Fire Station, 15580 Cala Rojo Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80926.

DATES OF NOTE:

- **March 5:** Advisory Committee meeting
- **March 30:** Colorado Department of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (CDRMS) review period will close.
- **Early April:** CDRMS decision date
- **April 25-26:** Mining and Land Reclamation Board hearing, location TBD.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NATIONAL AUDUBON issues and actions, go to the Audubon Action Center, audubonaction@audubon.org.

2018: YEAR OF THE BIRD

It's an interesting time to be heading into what the National Audubon Society (NAS) and National Geographic are jointly calling "The Year of the Bird," the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

Instead of resting in the relative safety of the MBTA protections, birds are under attack due to a new interpretation of the MBTA by the current administration. The US will no longer prosecute oil and gas, wind, and solar operators that accidentally kill birds.

According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service:

The MBTA provides that it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, possess, sell, purchase, barter, import, export, or transport any migratory bird, or any part, nest, or egg or any such bird, unless authorized under a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior. Some regulatory exceptions apply. Take is defined in regulations as: "pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect."

Audubon believes "that the policy reversal could make it less likely that energy operators would invest in precautionary measures to prevent bird deaths..." They claim that "the prospect of legal liability had fostered efforts such as developing bird-friendly guidelines for placing transmission lines," states the Washington Post.

Both National Audubon and Aiken Audubon are dedicated to opposing any legislation that would weaken the MBTA.

LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND SET TO EXPIRE

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which has funded federal, local and state conservation and recreation projects since 1965, is set to expire at the end of September, if not reauthorized.

With funding provided by offshore oil and gas leases since 1965, the LWCF has enabled the acquisition and development of public lands in Colorado thanks to over 1000 grants totaling \$58 million. Barr Lake, Castlewood Canyon, Chatfield Reservoir, Fountain Creek, Garden of the Gods, Ramah SWA and Two Buttes SWA are just some of the properties that have benefitted from the LWCF. As many of us can attest, these are important locations for our avian friends.

Currently, legislators are working for permanent annual funding of \$900 million. The House Committee on Natural Resource is struggling, however, to get the bill out of committee. The bill will die if it doesn't have the votes to move out of committee, which means the LWCF will expire. The President is in favor of either cutting/diverting the funding by 84% or letting it expire.

Aiken Audubon is working to convince Representative Lamborn, who serves on the committee, of the importance of this program, which was authorized to mitigate the environmental degradation resulting from offshore drilling. ☘

Hawaii... continued from front page

time before the sun returns. It was here that we first saw Red-vented and Red-whiskered Bulbuls. Other firsts included Oahu Amakihi and Red-masked Parakeet.

The Waimea Valley Audubon Center is another fabulous botanical garden. It is located on the North Shore near Campbell NWR. Plants and birds vie with archeological and religious sites to grab your attention. The valley stretches from shore to mountain with an abundance of wildlife. A nice variety of O'ahu's forest birds can be found here as well as harder to find species like Mariana Swiftlet (2016) and White Tern (2014). The area around the visitor center has Indian Peafowl, Red-crowned Parrots, and the secretive Red-billed Leothrix.

OTHER O'AHU LOCATIONS

- **Aiea Loop Trail:** This trail above Honolulu is the best place to see O'ahu Elepaio and Mariana Swiftlet as well as 'Apapane, 'Amakihi, and other forest birds.
- **Pearl Harbor NWR:** Endemic waterbirds and visiting waterfowl.
- **Ft. Derussey on Waikiki Beach:** Fairy Tern, parrots/parakeets, introduced birds like Java Sparrow and waxbills.
- **Ka'ena Point:** Boobies, tropicbirds, frigatebirds, albatross, other seabirds.

MAUI

KEALIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AND KAHANA PONDS

These two sites are found on the narrow isthmus that separates East and West Maui. They are both readily accessible and open to the public. They provide important habitat for native freshwater birds and offer havens for wintering waterfowl and migrating shorebirds.

Kealia NWR is a series of ponds that attract a large variety of birds. Land birds include both Gray and Black Francolins, Red-crested and Northern Cardinals, Japanese White-eye, and Northern Mockingbird. White-faced Ibis, Black-necked Stilt, and Cattle Egret are common waders. Shorebirds on our list include Wandering Tattler, Pacific Golden Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, and Sanderling. We have also seen Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Hawaiian Coot, and Orange-cheeked Waxbill.

We like to say that to get to the Kahana Ponds, just go to the Krispy Kreme and turn left. Being near the Kahalui International Airport makes this refuge easy to find. It is a great site for waterfowl, shorebirds, and the typical riparian species of Maui. Mynas, munias, and Nenes can be found along with Red Junglefowl, and Zebra, Spotted, and Mourning Doves. The refuge's proximity to the shore make Great Frigatebird, White-tailed Tropicbird, and Common Tern possibilities.



Pacific Golden Plover



Chukar

HALEAKALA NATIONAL PARK AND HOSMER GROVE

At an altitude of over 10,000 feet, a drive to Haleakala (House of the Sun) National Park is a must. You pass through farmlands, Rainbow Eucalyptus groves, and upland forests to get to the rugged and barren-looking crater. Excellent birding and spectacular scenery offer an unparalleled experience. On the drive up, look for Pueo (Short-eared Owl), Eurasian Skylarks, pheasants, and grassland birds. From the park headquarters to summit, be alert for Nene, Chukar, and a special treat. Just below the upper visitor center lies the main nesting colony for the Hawaiian Petrel. The birds nest here from April to August.

Hosmer Grove, to the left of the road just after the Park entrance kiosk, is Maui's best spot to see native Hawaiian Honeycreepers. 'Iwi (the American Birding Association 2018 Bird of the Year), 'Apapane, Hawai'i Amakihi, and Maui 'Alauahio can be seen flitting among the Eucalyptus, 'Ohia and Mamane trees. Two other species endemic to Maui and very rare visitors to the grove. Kiwikiu (the Maui Parrotbill) and 'Akohekohe (Crested Honeycreeper). While a sighting cannot be ruled out, it would be special. Be sure to document either of these gorgeous little birds.



Ring-necked Pheasant

Aloha and Mahalo until next time when we will put our birding scope on the Garden Isle, Kauai. ☘

President's Message, continued from front page

Peak Birding & Nature Festival is fast approaching so keep checking the website: PikesPeakBirdingAndNatureFestival.org.

We will have a new slate of board officers coming soon. The election will occur at the May meeting, which will also be our annual membership meeting. Please come and vote. [See back page for more information on open board positions.]

It's getting late and I have an early wake up. Enjoy this issue of the *Aikorns*.

Risë Foster-Bruder
President, Aiken Audubon Society



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You do not have to be a member to participate in Aiken's activities.

AIKEN AUDUBON ELECTIONS IN MAY

During the May monthly program, elections will be held for the positions of president, president elect, secretary, and treasurer. We hold five meetings per year (usually about 2 hours in length) to discuss Aiken business including the budget and future plans. If you are interested in volunteering to help Aiken Audubon and would like to submit your name for one of these positions, please send an e-mail message to luckdiane@gmail.com.

AIKEN'S WEATHER CANCELLATION POLICY

Sometimes inclement weather may cause us to cancel an Aiken meeting. If this happens, a decision will be made by 1 PM on the meeting date. Notification will be placed on our website, on our Facebook page, and sent out through our email notification list. In addition, a message will be posted on the CoBirds Listserv, which many Aiken birders subscribe to. If there is any doubt, please do not hesitate to contact any Aiken board members via telephone. Always, your safety is first so use your own judgement when coming to a meeting.



**Look for the
Aiken Audubon Society
Facebook page!**

facebook.com/pages/Aiken-Audubon-Society

Flores' Funnies



Artist Rick Flores, an El Paso County Nature Center volunteer, enjoys sharing his views of happenings at Bear Creek & Fountain Creek Nature Centers.