



May/Summer 2019
Volume 15/Issue 5

aikorns
AIKEN AUDUBON SOCIETY

APPRECIATING BIRDERS

by Leslie Holzmnn



There's something about a bunch of birders (or do birders come in a flock?) all fixated on the same rare bird. The smiles, the lifer dances, the high fives and slaps on the back. We may be perfect strangers, but the shared excitement overcomes all barriers.

Even when the bird isn't rare, there's still a sense of camaraderie rarely found in other activities. When birders gather, we can't help but want to share our enthusiasm

I recently spent a day at Corkscrew Swamp, in southern Florida. I was on my own, as my non-birding husband deserved a day off from driving me through wildlife refuges. Corkscrew is for walkers, not cars, so I didn't need his help.

Yet, I was never really alone. As I walked into the building to pay my entrance fee, someone remarked on the dense fog, hoping it would clear soon (it did). At my first stop, to check out any visitors to the feeders, everyone oohed and aahed over the Painting Bunting—and how could you not?

Then the sun peeked out, the insects took to the air, and suddenly there were birds everywhere I looked. Someone called out that they were on a White-eyed Vireo. When I mentioned that I'd never seen one, everyone wanted to help me get the lifer.



...continued on back page

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring is in full swing, and that means the busy season for bird and nature lovers is here! It's time to start cleaning up the garden and buying some new plants; visit audubon.org/native-plants for an easy way to find plants that are both native to our area and friendly for birds. Planning your garden around native species is great for birds, insects, and your water bill! I have a gorgeous desert four-o'clock in my yard that I only had to water the first year it was planted, and now it gives me an astonishing display of purple-pink flowers that goes on for much of the summer.



PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN

Spring also means that the Pikes Peak Birding and Nature Festival is right around the corner. This year's festival, which Aiken Audubon supports, runs from May 17 through 19. Many of the field trips and other events are already full, so make

...continued on page 2

Coming programs

MAY 15

Birds of the Ancient World

Kelsey Mazur

NO PROGRAMS OVER THE SUMMER

See you September 18!

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!

The deadline for submissions to the September/October 2019 issue of the *Aikorns* is Wednesday, August 21.

Contact the editor, Leslie Holzmnn, at Editor@AikenAudubon.com or call (719) 964-3197.

Inside this issue

Coming Programs	2
Support Aiken with a Smile	2
Field Trips & Events	3
Conservation Corner	4
Light's Out	5
Reduce, Recycle... Scavenge?	5
Flores' Funnies	back page

MAY 15 / KELSEY MAZUR BIRDS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Our last meeting before we take a break for the summer months will feature Kelsey Mazur (Bird Conservancy of the Rockies) giving us a historical perspective of Birds of the Ancient World. Through the examination of material and written sources, learn about how the people of pre-modern Scandinavia understood their place in nature, and the specific roles birds played in their lives. We will discuss folklore, mythology, and historical context to create a better understanding of the nature and birds ancient world and how we can learn from it today.

Kelsey has served as an educator and a coordinator for a variety of nature-based experiential education programs. She's gained professional experience building both citizen science and residential learning programs as well as inquiry-based family programs and summer camps. Kelsey loves working with students, volunteers, and the public to share her love for birds, nature, and all things wild. Kelsey is originally from Ohio where she attended Wittenberg University and earned a degree in history through studying pre-modern interpretations of the natural world.



NO MEETINGS OVER THE SUMMER SEE YOU SEPTEMBER 18

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

If inclement weather cancels an Aiken meeting, decision will be made by 1:00 PM on the meeting date. Notification will be placed on our website, on our Facebook page, and sent out through our email notification list. If there is any doubt, please contact any Aiken board member via telephone. Always, your safety is first, so use your own judgement when coming to a meeting.

President's Message, continued from front page

sure to register at pikespeakbirdingandnaturefestival.org if you haven't already. The PPBNF is a great opportunity to introduce friends and family members to birding, with many small-group field trips led by local experts.

And of course, spring means migration and the return of many of our breeding birds. I like to regularly check ebird.org to see what's been reported in my area so I know when it's time to put out the hummingbird feeder or stick halved oranges on the fence to feed hungry Bullock's Orioles. And for those of you who take the winters off of birding, it's time to dust off the binoculars and get back out on the trail!

Happy birding.

Anna Joy Lehmiche
President, Aiken Audubon Society

SUPPORT AIKEN WITH AMAZONSMILE

There's an easy way to support Aiken Audubon, and it won't cost you a dime. It's called AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. But when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Of course, we hope you'll choose Aiken!

It's simple. First, sign up at smile.amazon.com. Then, any time you order anything from AmazonSmile, Aiken Audubon will receive 0.5%. That may not seem like much, but it adds up. ☼

Aiken Audubon Board Members

PRESIDENT

Anna Joy Lehmiche

President@AikenAudubon.com

VICE-PRESIDENT

Clark Jones

VicePres@AikenAudubon.com

SECRETARY

[Position Open]

Secretary@AikenAudubon.com

TREASURER

Linda Hodges

(719) 425-1903

Treasurer@AikenAudubon.com

PROGRAM CHAIR

Diane Luck

Program@AikenAudubon.com

CONSERVATION CHAIR

Linda Hodges

(719) 425-1903

Conservation@AikenAudubon.com

PUBLICITY CHAIR

Julie Frost

303-912-8055

Publicity@AikenAudubon.com

EDUCATION CHAIR

Julie Frost

303-912-8055

Education@AikenAudubon.com

FIELD TRIPS

Diana Beatty

FieldTrips@AikenAudubon.com

HOSPITALITY

Kathy Minch

(281) 435-6850

Hospitality@AikenAudubon.com

CHRISTMAS COUNT

Tyler Stuart

(719) 661-9308

colospringscbc@gmail.com

AIKEN AUDUBON SOCIETY

330 E Costilla St., Box 79
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

INFO@AIKENAUDUBON.com

AIKENAUDUBON.COM

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, MAY 11, 7 - 11 AM FCNC SPRING BIRD COUNT

Fountain Creek Nature Center invites beginning to advanced birders to count and record the numbers of bird species and populations found in Fountain Creek Regional Park during the height of spring migration. Cost is \$5 per participant. RSVP to FCNC's [online registration](#).

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, TIMES IN BLUR CHICO BASIN RANCH

Join John Drummond to look 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 the following 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 \$15 fee per person, or \$10 each for groups of 10 or more. Contact Diana Beatty at otowi33.33@gmail.com with questions and/or to sign up.

MONDAY, JUNE 3, 7 AM - 9 AM BIRD WATCHING AT THE ZOO

Join Lead Zoo Keeper Jenyva Fox on a morning hike around Cheyenne Mountain Zoo looking for wild native birds! Your admission for the day is also included, so enjoy your day seeing lots of native and exotic species! This trip will take place before the zoo opens, so you won't be fighting the crowds.

This trip is designed specifically for Aiken Audubon, and includes a 50% discount on the normal zoo admission fee. Trip is limited to 15 participants; sign up through [Cheyenne Mountain Zoo's website](#).

More trips online!

For the latest information on field trips and events:

AikenAudubon.com

**FRIDAY - SUNDAY,
MAY 17 - 19**



REGISTRATION ENDS MAY 13!

PikesPeakBirdingAndNatureFestival.com

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 6:30 AM JIMMY CAMP CREEK / CORRAL BLUFFS

Jimmy Camp Creek is a 700-acre, city-managed park on the eastern edge of Colorado Springs. The ponderosa-juniper woodland, grassland, and riparian habitats that comprise this park are currently only accessible by guided hikes. More than 130 bird species have been recorded, along with mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn, bobcats, and jackrabbits. There are no established trails in the park, so plan on a moderately difficult 4 to 5-mile hike, depending on what we find. This trip is appropriate for all levels of birders, 12 and older. Closed-toed shoes and long pants are required.

Possible bird

species include:
Canyon Towhee,
Rock Wren, Sora,
Ash-throated
Flycatcher, Cas-
sin's Kingbird,
Western Tanager,

Dickcissel, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Lark Sparrow.

Meet at the Loaf N Jug gas station, 6857 Space Village Ave. Contact Sharon Milito at sharon.milito@comcast.net with questions or to sign up. Trip is limited to 15 people.



FRIDAY JUNE 7, 2018, 8 AM - 1 PM BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES AND BLOOMS LOVELL GULCH NATURE WALK

David Elwonger will again lead this nature walk in Lovell Gulch, in Pike National Forest. We will share our knowledge as we discover butterflies (usually 30+ species), flowers (with three species of orchid possible), and the local breeding birds (usually about 30 species).

Possibilities include: Red-naped and Williamson's Sapsuckers, MacGillivray's and Audubon's Warblers; Olive-sided, Hammond's and Cordilleran Flycatchers; Western Wood-Pewee; Steller's Jay; Clark's Nutcracker; Warbling and Plumbeous Vireos; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Black-headed and Evening Grosbeaks; three species of nuthatch; Townsend's Solitaire; Hermit Thrush; Western Tanager;

...continued on back page

PROTECT OUR PARKS

As a birder, have you enjoyed watching White-throated Swifts return to Garden of the Gods? Or have you viewed three species of scoters at Prospect Lake in Memorial Park, one of our area's few remaining bodies of water?

In the 21st century, bird habitat is being lost to development and fragmentation at a frightening pace. In fact, fragmentation is now the top concern of the Audubon Colorado Council (ACC). Not long ago, the city of Colorado Springs traded a piece of prime parkland to the Broadmoor. Though some of that parcel will be protected by a conservation easement, a chunk of it will be developed, and previously secluded habitat will be subject to the effects of large events. Loud noise. Heavy traffic. Fragmentation.

You may think that most of Colorado Springs' parks and open spaces are permanently protected from development, but, unfortunately, that is not the case. Properties purchased under the Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) ordinance are, indeed, protected—though a vote of the people could overturn that designation. Almost half of Garden of the Gods, Ute Valley, and North Cheyenne Canon Parks are not protected. Memorial Park and Prospect Lake are not protected, nor is undisturbed Jimmy Camp Creek Park. These are just a few of the parks, along with your neighborhood park, that could be lost to development at any time.

A group of people who care about the land and the wildlife that inhabits it do not want to see this happen. They have proposed a ballot initiative, Protect Our Parks, which would require a vote of the people before the city could sell, trade or otherwise dispose of any city parkland. Almost every city in Colorado has such an ordinance, including Boulder, Greeley, Grand Junction, Gunnison and Manitou Springs. Denver has had this type of ordinance in place since 1955, but recently changed it so that no parkland could ever be disposed of, period.

The Aiken Board voted unanimously to support the POPs initiative, as did the ACC, which represents the state's Audubon chapters.

A group of stakeholders will be meeting with city council and administrators on ballot language. We're hopeful the city will back this initiative for the November election.



PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN

REGULATING COLORADO OIL & GAS

A bill to strengthen the regulation of oil/gas operations in the state, SB 181, recently passed, which is good news for the birds.

The bill does a number of things. First, it modifies the mission of the Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) by eliminating their requirement to foster the industry, and now requires them to regulate development to protect public health, safety, and welfare as well as environmental and wildlife resources.

The makeup of the commission also changes with this bill. Instead of three representatives from the oil and gas industry, there is now one. Additionally, it includes a member with experience in wildlife protection, and a member with experience in public health.

Lastly, SB 181 increases local control by allowing local governments to include siting requirements for oil/gas operations in their zoning regulations. It allows locals to be more stringent than the state where minimums for things like setbacks, sedimentation control, compatible uses, and other activity directly related to land use are concerned.

MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT

The administration is in the process of sorting out the legal opinion, which should take a couple more months. In the meantime, National Audubon is working in various states to advance state-level protections for incidental take, and it's possible that the Natural Resources Defense Council will partner with them. From what we hear, Colorado would likely support such protections.

PLANTS FOR BIRDS

NEW YORK—"Birds are constantly facing a myriad of challenges to find natural spaces to rest and fuel up to complete their migration journeys," said John Rowden, director of community conservation at the National Audubon Society. "As we approach nesting season for many backyard birds, you can help feed baby birds by planting native plants in your yard or on your patios."

Users simply type in their zip code to search Audubon's Native Plants Database which offers a free online tool to discover the bird-friendly plants, trees, shrubs and grasses that are native to their region and locate a local supplier to start or grow their own backyard bird oasis.



PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN

Rufous Hummingbird on Agastache

Not only are native plants good for birds and the insects birds feed on, they are good for people, too. Native plants require less maintenance than exotic plants and they help the environment because they need less water and don't require synthetic fertilizer or pesticides.

AUDUBON'S "LIGHTS OUT" PROGRAM—BRINGING IT TO COLORADO SPRINGS

By Jenyva Fox

Each year, billions of birds migrate to their breeding and wintering grounds, the majority of these birds using the night sky to help them navigate. These birds are especially prone to disorientation when flying over cities as they can become confused by artificial lights and skyglow, causing them to fly lower and placing them at risk of building and window collisions. An estimated 1 billion birds die every year from window collisions from skyscrapers to individual homes.

Audubon's Lights Out program is a national effort to reduce these collision deaths by convincing building owners and managers to turn off excess lighting (from 10 PM – 6 AM) during the months migrating birds are flying overhead to facilitate safer passage.

Audubon lists these ways to help contribute to the Lights Out program:

- Turn off exterior decorative lighting
- Extinguish pot and flood-lights
- Substitute strobe lighting wherever possible
- Reduce atrium lighting wherever possible
- Turn off interior lighting especially on higher stories
- Substitute task and area lighting for workers staying late or pull window coverings
- Down-shield exterior lighting to eliminate horizontal glare and all light directed upward
- Install automatic motion sensors and controls wherever possible
- When converting to new lighting assess quality and quantity of light needed, avoiding over-lighting with newer, brighter technology

GET INVOLVED!

**CONTACT JENYVA
FOX (JENYVAT@
GMAIL.COM)
AND INDICATE
WHICH DAYS YOU
COULD SURVEY.**

In addition to reducing the number of bird deaths, taking steps to decrease the amount of light our buildings emit saves money by reducing energy consumption and can earn LEED credits.

There is a long list of cities and groups in both the United States and Canada who are participating in Lights Out. However, there currently are no Lights Out programs in Colorado Springs. We are looking to change that.

Jenyva Fox has been working with Lindsay Jacks, founder of [Lights Out Baltimore](#), to start up a local program. The first step is to determine whether or not there is a need for a local Lights Out program. This will entail daily survey work along a predetermined route in downtown Colorado Springs in the early mornings (before 8 AM) during the first part of May and the first part of October. Photos will be taken of deceased birds and their location will be logged to identify key buildings. Specimens may be collected for donation to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science for future study. Injured birds will be transported to a local wildlife rehabilitator.

Visit [Audubon's Lights Out program](#) for more information on Lights Out. To understand more about window collisions and birds and how we can help, visit the [American Bird Conservancy's website](#). ☿

REDUCE, RECYCLE... SCAVENGE?

By Matthew Lugincourt

As the warmer months set in and you get to spend more time outdoors, don't forget to protect the Earth while you enjoy it! Reducing and repurposing the products that we use is great for the environment and the birds who live in it. Let's explore a few birds who really embody the green spirit by scavenging animals killed by other causes!

Turkey vultures are some of the most well-known scavengers within the Americas, with their characteristic feeding behaviors seen throughout wildlife documentaries, films, and cartoons. They feed on carrion (dead animal flesh) of all sizes, from small mammals to large predators. It is quite rare for a turkey vulture to hunt prey on its own. In addition, turkey vultures forage by smell and are able to locate dead animal carcasses from great distances away solely by their odor.

Black-billed magpies have a varied diet, but carrion is a main food source for this species as well. Magpies are known as opportunistic feeders, and will not shy away from an opportunity

to consume an easy meal, even if it is decaying flesh. In addition, these cunning corvids will often follow large predators, such as wolves and coyotes, to steal from their kills. How sustainable!

Turkey vultures, magpies, and other scavengers benefit not only themselves but all animals by feeding on carrion. Without scavengers to consume these decaying carcasses, they would surely become breeding grounds for disease. Though their feeding habits may seem a bit disagreeable, scavengers play an essential role in our ecosystems.

Be sure to embody the same environmentally friendly mindset that scavengers do as you explore nature this summer. We don't recommend dining on carrion yourself, but minimizing your waste is great for nature and all our favorite birds! ☿

PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN



Appreciating Birders... continued from front page

It was like that everywhere I went. Birders want to help one another. They share experiences, point out hard-to-see birds, and suggest IDs. The day before, at Ding Darling NWR, everyone asked if I'd seen the pelican from Africa. I hadn't known to look. Even though the "Great White Pelican" turned out to be just another American White Pelican, it was better to share the anticipation—and the disappointment.

At Corkscrew Swamp, I ran into another photographer using the same lens I was. I commented that she had good taste in camera equipment, and we ended up spending the rest of our time there



together—an instant friendship based on a shared love of birds and photography. She was from Rhode Island—I'm unlikely to ever see her again—but our brief time together made the day that much more enjoyable. The highlight was when I spotted a Short-tailed Hawk overhead, and she got a terrific photo of it. (This one's mine, not nearly as good.)

There are definitely times when I plan a day birding because I need to be an introvert. I don't really want company, and I do my best to avoid the crowds. But most of the time, I welcome friendly birders. While I try to be observant, four (or six or eight) eyes are better than two. Birding with companions results in a longer trip list.

I'm reasonably good at winter shorebirds (we seem to visit the coast mostly mid-winter), but I'm first to admit that sparrows baffle me, and I have little experience with eastern warblers. I'm grateful when there's someone I can ask for help. It's highly unlikely that I would now have a White-eyed Vireo on my life list if I'd been alone when it appeared.



It works both ways. Many non-birders show up at Ding Darling NWR, probably because it's on Sanibel Island, a popular vacation destination. It's easy to pick them out—they're the ones without binoculars. As I photographed the birds at the various pull-outs, I was repeatedly asked if the large, pink birds we were seeing were flamingos. They'd never heard of a Roseate Spoon-

bill. Now they have, and I had the pleasure of introducing them to one of my favorite birds.

Assistance in spotting and identifying birds is helpful, but there's something I appreciate even more about my fellow birders. Any day birding is a good day, but it's an even better day if I can share the joy. Life is more fun when done together. ☘

Field Trips... continued from page 3

House Wren; and more (along with some surprises).

We will walk on trails into Lovell Gulch and back, a three mile round trip with about 500' elevation gain and a few short steep sections. We may need to bushwhack a short distance to find the orchids (which are not along the trails).

To carpool to the Lovell Gulch trailhead, meet at the northwest corner of the Woodland Park Walmart parking lot. Bring drinking water, a snack, rain gear, sweater for early morning chill, and wear sturdy walking shoes.

Limit: 10 participants. Contact David with questions and to register at davidelwonger@msn.com.

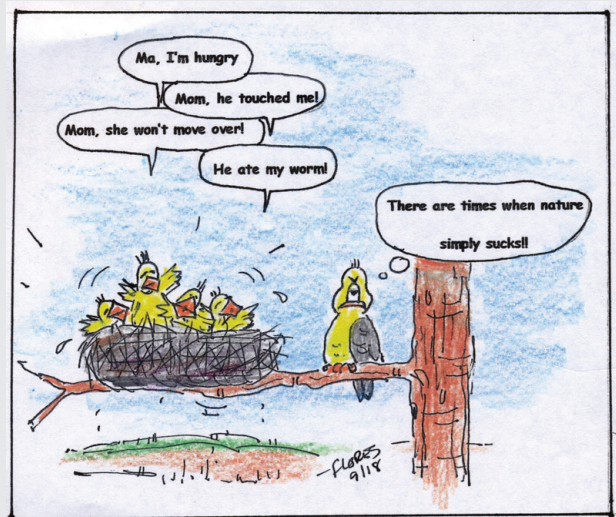
MONDAY, JUNE 17, 7 AM - 2 PM
EMERALD VALLEY BLOOMS,
BUGS, & BIRDS

Join Eric and Heidi Eaton on Aiken's annual search for the Yellow Lady Slipper Orchid, as well as numerous other wildflowers. We will see birds but they are not the top priority for this trip. Discover many insects as Eric and Heidi point them out throughout the day. Expect about three miles of hiking, half uphill, along a utility maintenance road.

Meet in the Safeway parking lot at 1920 S. Nevada to carpool, leaving promptly at 7 am and returning mid- to late afternoon. Limit of 12 people. Contact Heidi Eaton at hcenter@gmail.com with any questions and to reserve your spot.

Would you like to lead a field trip? No experience necessary, just enthusiasm and a friendly attitude. Contact Diana Beatty, FieldTrips@AikenAudubon.com, for more information on volunteering to lead a trip for Aiken Audubon.

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.