

Chukar Chatter

The Grand Valley Audubon Society's Newsletter



February 2012 — April 2012

Y'all Come!!

Volunteers Make It Happen!

2nd Annual

Bird House Bash

It's time to celebrate the time and talent of our many volunteers.



YOU

Make it Happen!!!

Monday, February 20, 2012

7:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.

1st Presbyterian Church

Birding for Everyone Trail

Grand Valley Audubon has the notion that all people should have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. More than a year ago the GVAS board began to explore ways to encourage people of all capabilities to enjoy our little corner of the world.

We began in 2010 by inviting Carol Hunter to be a guest speaker at one of our monthly programs. Carol is the author of *Everyone's Nature*, a guide to help wildlife and land management specialists provide opportunities for all visitors to participate fully in outdoor recreation facilities and programs. Carol brought insightful information to help us evaluate and improve our site so that people of all abilities feel welcome. To find out more about Carol and the work that she does, check out Partners for Access to the Woods (PAW) at www.outdoors4all.org.

Inspired by Carol, the GVAS board decided to develop the *Birding for Everyone* trail. Located on the east side of the Ela Sanctuary, the trail towards the Colorado River where it ends on an overlook giving good view of the riparian habitat. Once again, Bob Wilson took the lead in developing the trail.

It's nearly completed thanks to many volunteers, and special assistance from the Western Colorado Conservation Corp.

Grand Junction Lions Club recently donated \$4500 for 4 motion sensor digital players that will be installed in signs along the trail. The players will provide information about the variety of birds, animals and habitat in the area.

“Welcome” is such a common word, but one with a very important meaning. It means “received with pleasure and hospitality into one’s company”. For over 24 years, PAW and our partners have worked together to answer the question of “How can an outdoor recreation facility or program be designed so all are included or more importantly each individual feels welcome?”

From the **Partners for Access to the Woods (PAW)** website. Check it out.



Bob Wilson and the WCCC volunteer crew



Judi Parker Linnemeyer performs a test drive on the Birding for Everyone Trail.

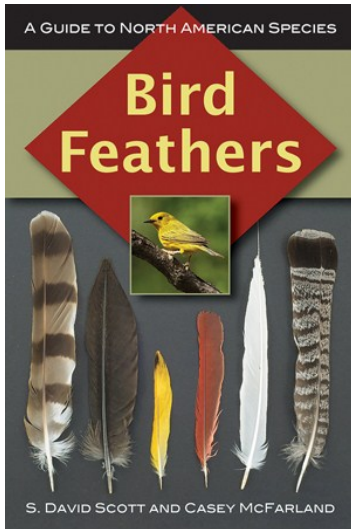
Email from Bob Wilson dated January 19, 2012: The Western Colorado Conversation Corps asked if they could do some trail building training on the Ela Sanctuary. I authorized them to do some exploratory work on the proposed trail on the west side of the Ela Sanctuary next to the Connected Lakes State Park.

I see this as a very rough trail with uneven surface winding through the 1983-84 cottonwood forest. There are lots of down trees and lot of beaver downed trees. It is impossible to walk through the area so the Corps can get experience with chainsaws.

If anyone would like to get involved in this please get in contact with me soon. I really do want to start another project.

Upcoming Programs

March 19 — Feathers & Feather Identification with Casey McFarland



Casey is co-author of just-released *Bird Feathers: A Guide to North American Species*. Finally, a field guide dedicated solely to the identification of feathers! Richly illustrated with nearly 500 color photographs, this one-of-a-kind field guide explains how to use feather type and shape as well as color to identify the species a particular feather came from.

Learn how a feather's design lends insight into bird physiology, flight styles and wing shape. Ranges, wing types, and feather measurements are given for the 397 birds covered, along with photographs of representative feathers. This is a valuable, information-packed resource for educators, biologists, and nature lovers

Also:

April 16 —
May 21 —

Nikki Grant-Hoffman BLM
Mary Taylor Young Naturalist Writer

Bird Talk

1st Thursday of each Month at noon
Brought to you by KAFM Radio 88.1

**GVAS PROGRAMS ARE HELD THE 3RD
MONDAY OF THE MONTH
7:00 P.M.
AT THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
3940 27 1/2 ROAD**

Wild & Scenic Film Festival

hosted by
Western Colorado Congress
University Center Ballroom
Colorado Mesa University
Saturday, March 24, 2012

Tickets on sale NOW at
Whitewater West
Summit Canyon Mountaineering
\$12 at the door / \$5 students
6 pm doors open / 7 pm films begin

Feature film - CHASING WATER

Photographer Pete McBride takes an intimate look at the Colorado River watershed as he follows the irrigation water that sustains his family's Colorado ranch, down river to the sea. Traversing 1500 miles and draining seven states, the Colorado River supports over 30 million people across the southwest. It is not the longest or largest U.S. river, but it is one of the most loved and litigated in the world. Today, this resource is depleted and stressed. Follow its path with an artistic, aerial view on a personal journey to understand this national treasure. McBride teamed up with his bush-pilot father to capture unique footage and also shadowed adventurer Jon Waterman who became the first to paddle the entire length of the river.



www.wccongress.org

GRAND VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIPS 2011-2012

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL FIELD TRIPS REQUIRE REGISTRATION - CALL THE TRIP LEADER
PARTICIPATION IN GVAS FIELD TRIPS COSTS \$5 PER FAMILY OR \$5 PER INDIVIDUAL**

GVAS WEBSITE: WWW.AUDUBONGV.ORG

Everyone is welcome to participate in our Field Trips, from beginning birders to experts

Date	Location	Leader (s)	Diff Scale	Meeting Place	Meet Time	End Time	Bring
2 0 1 2							
31 March Saturday	Annual Owl Prowl Call Trip Leader	March 31st: Dick Filby 376-1336	2	Dino- saur Journey - Fruita	1:00 p.m.		If weather o.k. evening trip to Uncompahgre Plateau or Grand Mesa after dinner break
1 April Sunday		April 1st: Bob Bradley 263-4613	2				
27-30 April Fri-Mon	Southeast Colorado, Oklahoma Panhandle & Northeast New Mex- ico	Bob Bradley 263-4613 & Fran & Paul Didier 242-8643	2-3	Please Call	8:00 a.m. Friday	Late Sunday	Warm Clothing; Lunch makings for 3 days
		If you are interested call or e-mail the Didiers for hotel and other information about this trip					
12 May Saturday	Spring Migratory Bird Count	Contact Party Leaders or the Didiers 242-8643	2-3	Various	Various	All Day	Lunch, Snacks & Water

SPRING BIRDING ADVENTURE:

South East Colorado, Oklahoma Panhandle and North East New Mexico

Grand Valley Audubon has planned a four day Spring Birding Field Trip for April 27th to the 30th to South East Colorado, Oklahoma Panhandle and North East New Mexico. The trip will be led by Bob Bradley and Fran & Paul Didier. The distance traveled will be about 1,000 miles roundtrip from Grand Junction.

We will visit and bird in the three locations listed below besides other possible stops along the way.

Lamar Community College in Lamar, Colorado – we have birded this area before and found it to be excellent. In 2007 we enjoyed seeing several species including the Mississippi Kite, the White-winged Dove, the Red-bellied Woodpecker, the Northern Cardinal and the Chimney Swift. Walk through the heavy riparian growth behind the college and along Willow Creek as it extends north to Willow Creek Park.

Black Mesa State Park – in the Oklahoma Panhandle. As you approach the Black Mesa area the wide open plains are suddenly interrupted by tall flat-topped mesas, deep canyons and steep slopes. At 4,793 feet above sea level, Black Mesa is the highest point in Oklahoma. The checklist of birds includes the Sage and Curve-billed Thrashers, Dicksissal, Brown Towhee, Grasshopper Sparrow, Lapland and Chestnut-collared Longspurs, as well as the Vermillion and Great-Crested Flycatchers and several other species not seen on the Western Slope.



Capulin Volcano National Monument – in the northeast corner of New Mexico. The Capulin volcano contains one of the best examples of a volcanic cinder cone in the nation. It rises steeply from the surrounding grassland plains to an elevation of 8,182 feet above sea level. Today a two-mile road winds up the volcano and five trails lead into the crater and around the rim. The irregular rim of the crater is about a mile in circumference and the crater is about 400 feet deep. The panorama includes views of four states (NM, CO, OK, TX). The checklist of birds includes the Pygmy Nuthatch, the Canyon Towhee and many others.

If you are interested let the Didiers know so we can give you the hotel information. Some of the hotels are small and signing up early will be important. Once you sign up we will send you maps, checklists and other information about the trip. There will be a limit of 14 people on the trip.

2nd Annual GVAS Fall Birding Festival:

It was cold, not cool, with monochrome grey skies, and not a ray of sunshine to be seen.... but at least it *wasn't* raining! What a contrast to last year's festival weather. The hardy folks who showed up anyway were treated to a number of great demonstrations including **ABC's of Birding** with Rhonda Woodward, **The Citizen Science Screech and Barn Owl Projects** with Nic Korte, **Binocular and Scope Demos** by the Cabela's staff, and everyone's favorite: **Falconry** with Ray Rickard his other falconer friends.

Mary Korte did a wonderful job of organizing this year's festival, which included a new "Children's Table" with bird related activities, as well as prize drawings for kids who did show up...(which meant every one of them!) Jan Burch's grandson displayed a natural talent for meeting and greeting visitors as he handed out prize drawing tickets. In fact, we would like to invite him to return next year as our official "Meet & Greet" Audubon Ambassador.

Nancy Wilson and Meg Cooper kept visitors fed with bagels, pastries, coffee and juice. The lemonade? I don't think it saw any takers at all. On this strangely bone-chilling day, people were searching for mittens, hats and extra layers and wishing for hot chocolate, instead.

Kathleen Tadvick and Trina Romero of Colorado Parks & Wildlife kept folks engaged about wildlife at their booth, while the Math & Science Center staff involved visitors with all kinds of hands on demos they had brought along. Western Anglers were tying flies, and good thing they had special gloves to assist them on this chilly day. Larry Collins' Wild Birds Unlimited booth had a variety of seed and feeders to entice backyard bird feeder enthusiasts. Between Bob Wilson's "make your own binocular straps" and the Banding Station (no birds netted on this cold day) demonstration, visitors had plenty to see and do, provided they wore their layers!

Special kudos go to Karen Levad for the beautiful Birding Festival Poster design, along with Gini Keller for her work behind the scenes. We owe generous thanks to REI for donation of binoculars, Barnes & Noble for prize donations, City Market, Enstrom's, Albertson's, Einstein Bagels and City Market for their generous food donations.

We hope to move the 3rd Annual Birding Festival back to late September when, with luck and cooperation from the weather gods, it will be warm, sunny and perfect for birds and humans.

BIRD BANDING 2011 SEASON by Cary Atwood, Banding Educator

With new net run locations in place, bander Amber Carver directing banding and a flock of volunteers, our fall banding season got underway at the Nature Center amidst the warmth of mid-September.

Due to a major change in curriculum, and minimal funds, many teachers were unable to attend bird banding with their 5th graders this year. They were sorely missed. However, we did have new schools in attendance for the first time, including Holy Family, Gateway School, Grand River Virtual and Independence Academies. Over 500 students from 8 different schools were treated to a wonderful trip in the "school of the great outdoors". We appreciate the efforts undertaken by teachers at Rim Rock, Wingate, Shelledy and New Emerson who know the great value this field trip has for their students....and came!

The banding station engages students in the science of bird migration and data collection. As Amber and her corps of volunteers checked nets and retrieved birds, students had opportunities to observe wild birds up close as she weighed, measured and checked feathers and fat content before their release. Although not a bird that is banded, a few American Coots met

an unfortunate end on the nearby power lines, but became great teaching tools for students as they increased their powers of observation, as well as their appreciation and understanding of unique bird adaptations. Students were also taken on a nature walk around the Ela Sanctuary.

It was another low count year, numbering only 18 species, with a total of 118 individual birds. The highest count numbers were among White Crowned Sparrows, Orange Crowned Warblers and Bushtits. Of note: not a single Yellow Rumped Warbler, and only one McGillivray's Warbler were netted.

Many, many thanks to the great group of dedicated volunteers who were out helping with net runs, with special recognition to Larry Arnold, Rosemary Engard, Eileen Cunningham and Anne Breckenridge. We also send thanks to Kathleen Tadvick at Colorado Parks and Wildlife for underwriting many of the transportation scholarships. We appreciate you all!!

Nic's Chatter by Nic Korte

Christmas Count Success: We had a perfect (non?) storm of events for counting Western Screech-owls during the 2011 Christmas Count. A mild fall probably helped recruitment of yearlings. We had perfect owling weather on count day. And, most of all, we had more volunteers. Seventeen teams with more than 30 individuals assisted in our tally of 54 owls—sure to be one of the highest counts nationally. If you didn't help, put the idea on your mental radar and help next year. It is fun and it doesn't take long!

Y7B?—How long have I been writing these columns? Well, I wrote one in 1999, "called 'Y6B?'" I am referring to billions of people, now up to 7. My dad was born in 1924 when the world population was roughly 2B. He was 35 before another billion were added. Does anyone doubt population is the root cause of many of our environmental problems? World-wide access to education of all sorts, including family-planning is critical to reigning in population growth, yet many of today's political candidates oppose these activities. Ensure that your candidates are on the side you support. Let them know!

Oil or habitat...a question of \$\$\$: In this political season, we hear a lot about jobs and a lot about energy production. How about a country that plans to "leave untapped more than 900 million barrels of crude oil." That is Ecuador's plan for the Yasuni area—one of the most biodiverse locations in the world. To keep the initiative on track, \$100 million was needed this year. Germany came through with \$50M to ensure the goal was satisfied. (The US has contributed \$100 million during the life of the project but the UK has done almost twice as much.) This effort is probably the most amazing and important conservation initiative in the world.

Go to <http://mdtf.undp.org/yasuni> to learn more. Unfortunately, to keep the initiative going, nearly \$300 million must be raised each of the next two years. Hopefully, we in the US can maintain political leadership that is sympathetic to this project.



Sustainable Use: The Yasuni initiative put me in mind of the sighting of a black-crowned antpitta in Costa Rica on our recent GVAS trip. Antpittas are very difficult to see besides requiring a very specialized habitat niche. I did some research using ebird.org and some other websites and learned that a visitor to Costa Rica, hoping to see this bird, would probably zero in on the location where we had success—a specific trail in one of Costa Rica's National Parks. Both GVAS trips hiked this trail. Both had lunch at the same nearby restaurant. If, 50 years from now, my grand-daughter decides to look for a black-crowned antpitta in Costa Rica, she will probably come to the same location—and eat at the same restaurant.

Famous Last Words—Trips to the tropics always put me in mind of the great ornithologist Alexander F. Skutch. He lived to be just a few days short of 100. His last book, published when he was 96, ended with an epilogue entitled "Birds I Love," and these final words: "In childhood I was strongly attracted to feathered creatures. This has continued into my life's tenth decade. As I review my seventy years of bird study, nearly all in the Neotropics, I am comforted by remembering that I have never intentionally harmed, for science or otherwise, an adult bird or its young, although I was responsible for the deaths of two or three raptors preying upon birds I was studying and/or trying to protect. In the evening of life, I am distressed by the thought that humankind, as a whole, lacks the generosity to freely share an exceptionally favored planet with even the more compatible of the free creatures that surround us. Earth did not become habitable for the benefit of a single species."

The Yasuni initiative and thinking of generations of black-crowned antpittas still being present 50 years from now gives me hope. On the other hand, Skutch's concern about whether "humankind as a whole" has sufficient generosity also concerns me. Audubon's role in educating "humankind as a whole" about our "exceptionally favored planet" is more important than ever. We need more helpers to keep GVAS strong. Please consider whether you can offer some time to assist with our many activities, whether administrative, educational or scientific. Ask one of the board members what you can do.

Let Them Know

Senator Michael Bennet www.bennet.senate.gov
458 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510
202-224-5852

Senator Mark Udall www.udall.senate.gov
328 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510
202-224-5941

Representative Scott Tipton <https://tipton.house.gov>
218 Cannon HOB
Washington DC 20515
202-225-4761

Odds & Ends

Board News: The GVAS Board conducted their annual board retreat on Saturday, February 12. The retreat provides GVAS leaders with the opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments and challenges that the organization faces and to help set the course for the coming year.

A non-profit board has the responsibility to set the direction for the organization, ensure that there are adequate resources (monetary as well as personnel) available, and to provide oversight so that the organization’s mission is being supported by the activities and programs.

Several priority areas were identified:

- Membership Development
- Building and strengthening Board and Committee leadership
- Create a Property Management Plan

You’ll be hearing more about these areas of focus in the months ahead. Just be assured that they are all intended to support the GVAS mission *to foster an appreciation for birds and other wildlife, preserve a diversity of habitats, and provide a sustainable healthy environment through education, research and individual action.*



GVAS Board: Leon Thurmon, Doug Shoffner, Nic Korte, Bob Wilson, Bennett Boeschenstein, Jessie Wilbert, Larry Collins, Cary Atwood. Not pictured: Rob Magill

Check out our new website!
www.audubongv.org



Become a Member! Invite a Friend!!

The Grand Valley Audubon Society Local Membership Application

Please enroll me/us in the Grand Valley Audubon Society.

Benefits:

- Satisfaction that membership dues stay local
- The quarterly **Chukar Chatter** to keep you informed on GVAS projects and activities
- Easy way to support habitat recovery and environmental issues in the Grand Valley
- Support our “No Child Left Inside” efforts to help students learn about and enjoy the great outdoors

Name/s: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

_____ Individual \$35 _____ Family \$40 _____ Student \$20

_____ I want to donate more to support the mission of Grand Valley Audubon Society! Please accept my tax-deductible donation.

Make checks payable to GVAS, PO Box 1211, Grand Junction, CO. 81502 or apply on-line at www.audubongv.org

Join or donate to National Audubon Society directly and receive the AUDUBON Magazine! Call 1-800-274-4201 or go to www.joinaudubon.org. Use chapter code C2ZD040Z

Chukar Chatter

This newsletter is published four times a year: September-November, December –February, March-May, and June-August by the Grand Valley Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Readers are encouraged to submit original articles or art to the Chatter. Please state if the article or art has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to edit and to select suitable articles for publication. Please feel free to reproduce and distribute all or any part of this publication.



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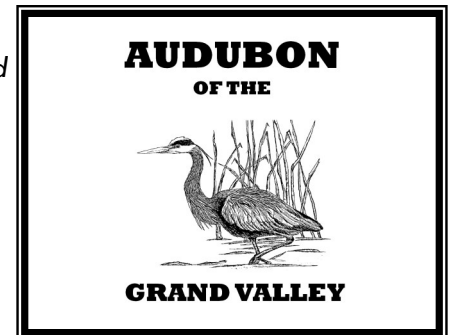
Who's Whooo at Audubon

GVAS Board:

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Nature Center & Lucy Ferril Ela
Wildlife Sanctuary
at Connected Lake State Park

We're on the Web!
www.audubongv.org