



THE DiPPER

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EVERGREEN AUDUBON NEWSLETTER

www.EvergreenAudubon.org

SUMMER CAMP SPACE IS STILL AVAILABLE REGISTER NOW!

If your child loves nature and wants to learn more about it while having a blast outdoors, sign him or her up for our summer day camp programs. We have sessions for ages 4-5; 6-7, and 8-10. Visit our website to learn more and register.

www.evergreenaudubon.org/programs-and-events/day-camp



VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Supporting Evergreen Audubon with your time is priceless. Come to our Volunteer Orientation meeting on Tuesday night, April, 18th from 6:30-7:30 pm to learn all the ways you can get involved.

NESTING DAY!

Help us take all the exhibits out of storage and set up the Evergreen Nature Center. It's an annual event and we have a blast while we get excited for the coming season. We'll be working at the nature center from 10am to 3pm. Come by when you can.

Contact Colleen Kulesza for details (303-900-8586 or enclirector@evergreenaudubon.org) for details.

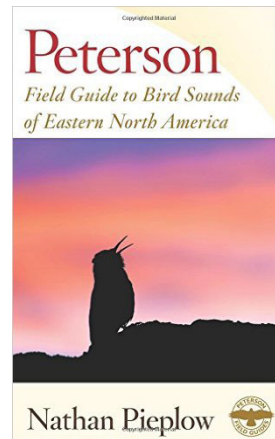
CHAPTER MEETING: BIRD SONG DECODED ED FURLONG

Spring is rapidly arriving in our Evergreen world, even as we anticipate the possibility of spring snowstorms. One of the most pleasurable ways Spring announces itself is by the sounds and songs of returning and migrating birds to the Bear Creek Watershed, such as our Western and Mountain Bluebirds, and the increase in activity and vocalizations by those hardy avian winter residents—I'm thinking of you, Black-Capped Chickadee and Dark-Eyed Junco!

Even as the volume turns up in the aspens and along our creeks and streams, we are often left to wonder: what do all the calls and songs signify? What are the uses and meanings of these sounds beyond establishing territories and finding mates? Perhaps most importantly, you may ask yourself how in the world do I learn the differences between species, particularly the many that sound so similar? It can drive you to distraction!



Don't despair, but come to our next Evergreen Audubon Chapter meeting, on Thursday evening, April 6, 2017, when author and



bird song expert Nathan Pieplow helps us in our understanding of the language of birds with his presentation "Bird Sounds, Decoded". Come at 6:30 pm to the Evergreen Audubon Education Center (29997 Buffalo Park Road) to visit with your fellow members and Evergreen neighbors, and stay for a fascinating presentation that engages the eyes and ears. The presentation will start at ~7:20 pm, after a brief business meeting.

Identifying birds by sound is a crucial skill that can be difficult to learn. Author Nathan Pieplow has devised a system that lets you identify bird sounds without having to memorize them. The Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds lets you look up sounds, the way you look up words in the dictionary. The key is learning to visualize sounds. Nathan's clear, practical instructions for visualizing sounds will make you a better listener. You will hear details in sound that you hadn't noticed before, and you will have the vocabulary to describe those details. Nathan will help you identify birds by their sounds, but he will also help you understand birds by their sounds. For the sounds of birds are a language, carrying messages from one bird to another. To understand the language,

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Evergreen Audubon

2017 OFFICERS

President	Kathy Madison	303-670-0209 president@evergreenaudubon.org
Vice President	Brad Andres	303-670-0101 vicepresident@evergreenaudubon.org
Secretary	Lisa Wald	303-810-5083 secretary@evergreenaudubon.org
Treasurer	Rachel Hutchison	301-768-3523 treasurer@evergreenaudubon.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bird Monitoring	Chuck Aid	303-674-3331 birdmon@evergreenaudubon.org
Communications	Melissa Leasia	303-674-6406 communications@evergreenaudubon.org
Conservation	David Walker	303-881-6998 conservation@evergreenaudubon.org
Development	Ann Dodson	303-670-8264 development@evergreenaudubon.org
Education	Ed Furlong	education@evergreenaudubon.org
Social Events	Peggy Linn	303-674-2239 socialevents@evergreenaudubon.org
At Large	Mendhi Audlin	817-296-5817 atlarge1@evergreenaudubon.org
At Large	JoAnn Hackos	303-670-8517 atlarge2@evergreenaudubon.org

OTHER CONTACTS

Nature Center	Colleen Kulesza	303-900-8586 encdirector@evergreenaudubon.org
Webmaster		webmaster@evergreenaudubon.org

Chapter Meetings first Thursday, 6:30 p.m. except January, at the Audubon Education Center, 29997 Buffalo Park Road.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE KATHY MADISON

As we move into April, we'll start seeing a change in weather and wild-life activity. The bluebirds will be nesting, the bears will be stirring and foxes will be having their kits. And, the most important change April brings is the opening of the Evergreen Nature Center (ENC).

The Nature Center will open on Saturday, April 22nd, the same day as the annual Earth Day Celebration at the Evergreen Lake House. Look for Colleen's announcements about recruiting volunteers to help with nesting day, our setup day for the Nature Center, and for announcements about training sessions for new and returning Visitor Assistance volunteers. Every year, even before I became president, I gave myself a person goal to recruit at least one new Visitor Assistant each season. Volunteering at the Nature Center doesn't have to be a huge commitment. You can help us by donating just 2-3 hours a month. Even if you're new to the area or feel you don't know enough about our local environment, we could still use your help. We'll train you and make sure a seasoned volunteer is paired with you during your shifts. We'll also have Colleen and a part-time Seasonal Naturalist on hand to teach you all sorts of great natural history facts and stories. Before you know it you'll be sharing how we acquired Heather the Mountain Lion and Bob the Bear; kicking off puppet shows; talking at length about our resident double crested cormorants, elk and muskrats; and encouraging families to participate in our after school programs, summer camps and the Explore More! challenge. As a thank you for your services, volunteers are treated to an appreciation event at the end of the season. Last year's volunteers were awarded with a special field trip to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Refuge where they were given a presentation on black-footed ferrets and even got to see a pair being fed. They also received a tour of the National Eagle Repository.

ENC will be open on weekends from 9am-5pm (two 3-hour shifts and one 2-hour shift for volunteer Visitor Assistants) until Memorial Day. After Memorial Day we will also be opened Thursday and Friday 12pm-4pm (two 2-hour shifts). These are new operating hours based on a review of the attendance on various days and times over the last few years. We will continue to be open for the same number of hours during the summer (24 hrs. a week) but will be closed on Wednesdays. Of course, if you don't plan to volunteer, I still encourage you to stop by the Nature Center to enjoy our special resource!

Don't forget about Brad's 2017 Birding Challenge. You've got 4 ways to achieve the challenge. Either see or hear 106 species in the Bear Creek Watershed, 129 species in Jefferson County, 71 species in Clear Creek County, or 166 species in Colorado. I'm trying for all four, but at the rate I'm going with zero species in Clear Creek County it's going to be a stretch!

-Kathy

CHAPTER MEETING CONT.

and decode the messages, all you need is the right dictionary.

Nathan Pieplow is the author of the Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds. He blogs about bird sounds at the website Earbirding.com. He is one of the authors of the Colorado Birding Trail and a former editor of the journal Colorado Birds. He teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

PLEASE NOTE: Nathan has offered to sign copies of the recently published Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds. If you are interested in having Nathan sign one or more copies for you (they make great gifts!), he suggests you purchase a copy from your favorite book vendor ahead of the meeting and bring it with you. If you use Amazon

Smile (www.smile.amazon.com), you can designate Evergreen Audubon as a beneficiary for a small contribution from your purchase. There also are many worthy local booksellers who would be happy to order a copy for you as well.

So plan on arriving at Evergreen Audubon Education Center at 6:30 on Thursday, April 6 to visit with your fellow Chapter members, compare Spring bird sightings, and get a good seat for an auditory education and lively presentation. I hope to see you there!



EARTH DAY CELEBRATION!

COLLEEN KULESZA

Join us at the 28th Annual Mountain Area Earth Day Fair from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday, April 22 at the Evergreen Lake House, 29614 Upper Bear Creek Road. Admission is free to all ages. Donations are welcome as it helps us continue this wonderful tradition.

Growing since 1990, the fair regularly features over 30 federal, state, and local agencies, nonprofit organizations and businesses. Up-to-date information on critical issues will be available for open discussions and to take

home. One of the festival's most popular groups, HawkQuest, will again present its live raptors.

The first Evergreen Earth Day Fair was held in 1990 at the Old Brick School and was the brainchild of Evergreen Naturalists Audubon Society member Carl Keiser along with community movers and shakers, Mary Dickhoff, Marian Phillips and Etta Satter.

Through the years the Fair has grown in size and reputation, featuring environmental and community information.

The Evergreen Park and Recreation District has sponsored the fair at the Evergreen Lake

House for over a decade.



10TH SEASON OF EVERGREEN NATURE CENTER BEGINS APRIL 22ND!

Join us for the 10th season of providing awesome experiences and educational opportunities for visitors to Evergreen Lake. We've got interactive exhibits all about the plants and animals of the Bear Creek Watershed. Admission is free and donations are appreciated. We are open every weekend from April 22nd to October 15th and on Thursdays and Fridays from June 1st through September 31st.



Hours of Operation:
April 22nd - May 31st

June 1st - September 3rd

September 4th - October 15th

Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm

Thursday & Friday 12pm to 4pm
& Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm

Saturday & Sunday 9am to 5pm

2017 BIRDING CHALLENGE BRAD ANDRES

Last year, we launched the 2016 Bear Creek Watershed Birding Challenge to mark the 100th birthday of the Migratory Bird Treaty between the United States and Canada. At least 13 Audubon members met the challenge of seeing 100 species in the watershed and joined the *Centennial Club*. Combined, these folks observed 183 species in the watershed last year!

After some discussion at the banquet in January, we decided to expand the scope of the challenge for 2017, but still include Audubon's focus area of the Bear Creek Watershed.

This year's challenges are to observe one-third of the recorded species in one or more of the following areas:

Bear Creek Watershed - spot 106 of 318

Jefferson County - spot 129 of 387

Clear Creek County - spot 71 of 212

Colorado - spot 166 of 499



Note that these lists are not mutually exclusive and you can keep as many of the four lists as you would like. A species counts if you can confidently identify it through sight or sound within that area. Be sure to join us on our numerous guided bird walks throughout the year to complete the challenge. Check our calendar on the website for upcoming walks.

As last year, the challenge will run throughout the calendar year from January 1 to December 31, 2017. Winners will be announced and acknowledged at our annual banquet in January of 2018.

WISH LIST COLLEEN KULESZA

Donating new or gently used items to the Evergreen Audubon's Education Center and Nature Center are always appreciated. The following list contains items we are seeking at this time. If you have something not on the list but you think it could be useful to us, please contact Colleen Kulesza at encdirector@evergreenaudubon.org or call her at 303-900-8586.

EDUCATION & EXHIBITS

- bird feeders
- shepherd's crooks
- DSLR Camera that can do both photos and videos
- crafting supplies
- birding scope for the Nature Center
- microscopes
- magnifying glasses
- poker chips
- tree cookies
- bird nests
- d++igital photos of local plants and animals we can use on web and in print
- egg cartons (paper or cardboard - not styrofoam)
- plastic bleach or large detergent bottles

OFFICE

- office chairs with wheels (4)
- electric tea kettle
- floor lamps
- vacuum
- label maker
- one gallon ziploc bags
- hangers
- paint

TOOLS/MAINTENANCE

- 8 ft. tall step ladder
- power drill
- painting tools
- garden wagon (4 wheels)
- metal trash can with fitted lid
- dolly/hand truck

Highlights from March 1 Bird Walk to Squaw Pass

Twelve of us visited two locations at 10,300 ft and 9,500 ft in the vicinity of Squaw Pass. It was breezy and a bit chilly, but not unbearable, and it was wonderfully sunny. And, while we only ended up seeing fourteen species, a few birds were seen that most of us, who live in the foothills or out on the plains, don't regularly encounter.

First of all, we were fortunate to see all six of the generally recognized subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco, that is to say: Cassiar, Slate-colored, Oregon, Pink-sided, White-winged, and Gray-headed. Two of the big highlights were getting to hear and see some Gray Jays and many Red Crossbills. Oh, and did I forget to mention the Clark's Nutcracker and the Cassin's Finches that we got to see up close and personal?

The real pinnacle of the day was getting to see our target birds for the trip, the Rosy-Finches - roughly two hundred of them. Swirling around in clouds of a hundred birds at a time they would drape the tops of the nearby spruces, and then descend en masse onto the feeders. Needless to say, the good views were PLENTIFUL, and we were able to record both sub-species of Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch as well as the more plentiful Brown-capped Rosy Finches. The fact that there were adult-males, first-year males, and many females contributed to an intriguing amount of plumage variation. Search, as we could, we were unable to locate any of the more rare Black Rosy-Finches. All in all, a most satisfactory outing!



Brown-capped Rosy-Finch (c) Bill Schmoker



Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (Interior race) (c) Bill Schmoker



Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (Hepburn's race) (c) Bill Schmoker

Highlights from March 18 Owl Expedition

Fourteen of us devoted an unseasonably warm Saturday afternoon and evening to exploring for owls and seeing a few other birds in the process. We began at Bear Creek Lake Park and with the help of Rob Raker, who helps the park with wildlife inventories, we were able to see three female Great Horned Owls on their respective nests scattered along Bear Creek. Two of the owls were ensconced in cavities in mature cottonwoods, and the third was on a large stick nest. At least one of the nests already had owlets in it. Search as we might, we could find none of the attendant males.

As the evening began, we then moved up into the foothills, and after a thirty-minute hike found ourselves in a nice open meadow with a nearby mix of montane shrubs, aspen, and ponderosa pine. We grabbed a quick bite while enjoying a glorious sunset, and then set about our business of trying to find some of the small mountain owls.

Northern Pygmy-Owls are often most active during the evening, but as we moved past that time without hearing any owl calls, we began to descend back to our cars in the dark. By the time we came to one of the last aspen groves, most of us had resorted to using our headlamps, and then we finally heard two Northern Pygmy-Owls calling from opposite directions. And then, quite close to us a Northern Saw-whet Owl, quite spontaneously, gave a little screech call a couple of times.

On the way back to the cars we contemplated the winter constellation Taurus charging into Orion.



Northern Pygmy Owl (open source photo)



Saw-whet Owl (c) Marilyn Rhodes



Great Horned Owl (c) Rob Raker

VOLUNTEER TRIP TO ROCKY MT. ARSENAL COLLEEN KULESZA

Every year we plan an appreciation field trip for all the hard working volunteers of Evergreen Audubon. This year, we spent the day at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. We spent some time in the visitor's center and attended a program all about the black-footed ferret program. We got a behind the scenes tour of their enclosure and got to watch them eat. We had a picnic by the ponds and then did a little birding along the newly opened roads. We saw lots of eagles and ducks. Then we had a tour of the National Eagle Repository and the National Wildlife Property Repository where we learned how the Fish and Wildlife Service handles eagle carcasses and wildlife items that are confiscated at various ports and airports. It was a fascinating trip and everyone had a great time. If you'd like to join us next time as we take another fun trip, consider becoming a volunteer and helping out with the nature center, conservation, or behind the scenes administration. Attend the upcoming Volunteer Orientation (April 18, 6:30 to 7:30 at the Education Center) to learn more about all the opportunities available.



(c) Lisa Wald



(c) Lisa Wald



(c) Ed Furlong



(c) Ed Furlong



(c) Lisa Wald

I attended Paul Bannick's talk about owls at the February 2017 meeting of the Denver Field Ornithologists. The talk was fascinating, and the opportunity to get a signed copy of his new book, **Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls**, couldn't be passed up. Many of the slides Bannick used in his talk are among the 200 plus images that appear in the book. But it's not a coffee-table, picture book. It is an account of the year in an owl's life, featuring four owls: Northern Pygmy-Owl, Great Gray Owl, Burrowing Owl, and Snowy Owl. Yes, the photographs are spectacular but certainly not secondary to the story.

Bannick's experience with owls began when he found a Snowy Owl atop a telephone pole near his boyhood home. He began to learn about the 19 owls that call North America (north of Mexico) home. The text is divided into four sections: Courtship and nest selection, Life in the nest, Gaining independence, and Surviving the winter. At the end of the book is a fairly comprehensive field guide.

Courtship and Nest Selection

With all the owls around Evergreen, most of us know that owls begin nesting in the dead of winter. The pair



Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls, Paul Bannick, Braided River Press, 2017.

of Great Horned Owls in Bergen Park appeared in early February. The female was sitting on the nest by early March. Bannick notes that owls are primarily solitary except when they come together to mate. Some species, like our Bergen pair, apparently come together again in the same location each year if the nest site is available. Others like the Northern Hawk Owl range over hundreds of miles through the year, choosing a nest site and finding a new mate each season.

Owls attract their mates through a series of advertising calls, including hoots, whistles, toots, and trills. Short-eared Owls sky dance. Spiraling up to more than a thousand feet at times and then descending in short dives, the Short-eared Owls hoot and clap their wings. They nest in lots of different places, including man-made structures. Some owls like to nest at the top of a snag, one reason to keep standing snags on your land. Many small owls prefer

cavities carved out by woodpeckers, which includes aspens in our conifer forests. Others, like the Burrowing Owl, nest in tunnels or on the ground.

Bannick treats us to a detailed account of the courtship behavior of one of our local owls, the Northern Pygmy-Owl. At one time, he spent every weekend for three months watching and photographing these owls, observing their behavior from 5:30 am to 8 pm. That's dedication!

Life in the Nest

Owls are prey specialists. Some prefer small mammals like voles and mice; others prefer insects; still others hunt anything they can find. What they hunt is revealed by the appearance of their faces. Those with facial disks, like the Barn Owl, hunt by using their hearing. Northern Pygmy-Owls, which don't have a distinct facial disk, hunt by sight. They also have shorter wings that let them pursue prey among trees.

In this section, we learn about clutch size and incubation of the eggs. Bannick includes many pictures of owlets, which often are different sizes, having hatched on an uneven schedule. The larger female owls incubate and brood the young while the smaller male hunts. At about two weeks, the owlets have a coat of gray or brown feathers. By four weeks, the young owls are practicing using their wings and hopping around the nest.

Bannick's account of the Great Grey Owl's nesting behavior meant watching a female in the Oregon Cascades. This owl never leaves her nest, even when accosted by pesky ravens and aggressive goshawks. Bannick once spent more than eight hours in a blind thirty feet up waiting for the female Great Grey to even twitch. He watched this same owl use her talons to strike an erstwhile black bear that came too close.

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Great Grey Owl (c) JoAnn Hackos



Great Grey Owlet (c) JoAnn Hackos

Gaining Independence

Young owls leave the nest when they can fly or are almost ready to fly. As they grow bigger and eliminate more waste, the nest becomes increasingly less safe. They must leave the nest as soon as possible to escape predation. While the ground-nesting owls can simply walk away, owls that are born in nests high in trees must make a first leap. They flap and flutter to the ground and then walk away with the parents, usually toward areas that have abundant prey.

Bannick sets up a blind to watch the Burrowing Owls in a grassland in Kansas and finds them difficult to photograph as families. He watches eleven little owls emerge from a burrow and stand shoulder to shoulder. Is it one family or many? In dense prairie dog colonies, the young owls are safer from predators because of the watchful mammals. The owls themselves use elevated perches to watch for predators.

Young Burrowing Owls mature quickly. At two weeks, they are already curious, tilting or rotating their heads to see what's around. They learn to run, diving into their burrows when threats appear. At four weeks, they are beginning to fly and do some of their own hunting.

Surviving the Winter

Bannick explains just how challenging it is for owls to survive the winter by finding the food they need to survive. Some migrate hundreds or thousands of miles south to winter areas. Others search for territories where winter prey are abundant, which also sometimes means thousands of miles of wandering. In Colorado, we have witnessed the

appearance of wandering Snowy Owls looking for food on the winter prairie.

Owls must take chances to find enough food to survive. Bannick reports seeing three Barn Owls in a group of cottonwoods with two Great Horned Owls, their natural predators. Potential starvation makes strange bedfellows.

Snowy Owls survive the extreme low

temperatures and darkness in the Arctic. Some remain in their breeding territories if they find sufficient prey. Others move north, even going out to sea to prey on seabirds like Eiders. Others, as we have experienced in Colorado, head south to the Great Plains, often when a large number of young owls survive a good prey season.

In addition to the four major sections, Bannick adds vignettes on special topics, usually with stunning photographs. You will find habitat descriptions of arctic tundra, southwest drylands, boreal forests, and western mountain meadows.

Certainly, get a copy of Bannick's Owls for the photographs, but don't neglect the interesting and very personal story he has to tell.

Go to our website to learn more and register!
www.EvergreenAudubon.org/day-camp

Summer Day Camps

Exploring Nature

June 19 - 23 6 - 7 year olds	
July 17 - 21 8 - 10 year olds	
July 31 - August 4 4 - 5 year olds	

Evergreen Audubon

Education Center
 29997 Buffalo Park Road
 Evergreen, CO 80439
 303-330-0489

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

APRIL			
Wednesday, 5th	Bird Walk at Red Rocks	6:45 - 11:30 am	Evergreen Library (meet)
Thursday, 6th	Chapter Meeting	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Education Center
Saturday, 8th	Nesting Day at ENC	10am - 3pm	Evergreen Nature Center
Saturday, 15th	Guided Bird Walk	7:00 -11:00 am	TBD
Tuesday, 18th	Volunteer Orientation	6:30 - 7:30 pm	Education Center
Saturday, 22nd	Earth Day Festival	10 am - 3 pm	Evergreen Lake House
Saturday, 22nd	Opening Day	10:00 am	Evergreen Nature Center
Wednesdays	After School Program	3:30 - 5:30 pm	Education Center

MAY			
Wednesday, 3rd	Guided Bird Walk	7:00 -11:00 am	TBD
Thursday, 4th	Chapter Meeting	6:00 - 8:30 pm	Education Center
Wednesday, 10th	Wednesday Wild Ones	11 am - 12 pm	Evergreen Nature Center
Saturday, 13th	Dawn Chorus!	6:00 - 11:00 am	Evergreen Nature Center
Saturday, 20th	Guided Bird Walk	7:00 -11:00 am	TBD
Wednesdays	After School Program	3:30 - 5:30 pm	Education Center

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!

Evergreen Audubon Local Membership Application

I/we would like to join the Evergreen Audubon. I/we may participate in all chapter activities, receive the newsletter electronically, and vote (two Family members may vote) on chapter issues. Dues remain locally.

Name _____

Family member name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____ Email _____

(include to receive electronic newsletter and updates)

	Individual	Family
Annual dues	\$ 25	\$ 40
Additional donation	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total enclosed	\$ _____	\$ _____

Enclosed is my check payable to: Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 523, Evergreen, CO 80437.

I DO NOT want solicitations from National Audubon.

If you would like to join or donate to the National Audubon Society directly and receive the AUDUBON Magazine, call 1-800-274-4201 and use chapter code C9ZD090Z.