

Chukar Chatter



The Grand Valley Audubon Society Newsletter

Bird Banding Program Returns to the Grand Valley!



We are very fortunate to have funds to hire two fantastic and energetic educators to enrich the bird banding experience for students. Tracy Baron, former elementary teacher in SD51, and Renee Herring, former Watchable Wildlife coordinator promise to be a dynamic team to engage students in the school of the great outdoors. In addition, we welcome the return of Linnea Rowse, a gentle and very experienced bander who connects so well with students.

After a two- year absence, due to a change in School District 51's calendar, Grand Valley Audubon's bird banding program will begin anew on September 18 and continue Monday through Friday for students, culminating on Saturday, October 15, a public banding day that morning, from 8 a.m.-11:30 a.m. open to all.

In conjunction with *Bird Conservancy of the Rockies* and *Colorado Parks and Wildlife*, we are once again underwriting the transportation and education costs of a half day outdoor learning experience for fourth graders around the Valley, including home school and charter school populations.

The 21st Century academic standards for math and science in 4th grade are a perfect fit with bird banding, as students study characteristics of living things, and how they interact and adapt to their environment.

So far, all spots for September banding days are booked with local elementary schools and teacher requests are coming in daily for October dates. We anticipate it will be a full calendar of banding days.



WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! If you have volunteered at the banding station in past years or would like to spend an hour or two on a daily/ weekly basis in the company of migrating and resident birds and the people who care about them, please contact Cary Atwood, Bird Banding Coordinator catwood814@gmail.com

Fall Calendar

September 9: Creature Adventure at the Audubon Nature Preserve

Audubon volunteers will help parents and kids explore the small but spectacular creatures of the Grand Valley. We'll search for frogs and other pond life, catch and identify cool insects and learn fun facts about backyard critters. This event is free and geared towards 4-8 year olds. 2 to 5 p.m.

September 17: Colorado National Monument Autumn Bird Walk

Led by Cary Atwood. Meet at 8:15 at Devil's Kitchen Parking Area. Binoculars highly recommended but no birding experience is necessary to enjoy this 90 minute birding walk.

September 18: Birding Adventures Afield and At Home

GVAS President Cary Atwood will be speaking about her recent trips to the New River Nature and Birding Fest in West Virginia and Audubon's Hog Island Camp in Maine. In addition, GVAS Treasurer and owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, Larry Collins, will give tips on backyard bird feeding and feeder sanitation to keep your feathered visitors healthy. First Presbyterian Church, 3940 27 1/2 Road GJ. Starts 7:00 p.m.

October 15: Public Bird Banding Day GVAS Nature Sanctuary 8 - 11:30 a.m.

October 16: Colorado National Monument Autumn Bird Walk

Led by Cary Atwood. Meet at 8:30 at Devil's Kitchen Parking Area. Binoculars highly recommended but no birding experience is necessary to enjoy this 90 minute birding walk.

October 30: Birds and Water in the West

Abby Burk, the Western Rivers Program Lead from **Audubon Rockies**, will be talking about National Audubon's report: "*Water and Birds in the Arid West: Habitats in Decline.*" Presentation will take place at Colorado Mesa University. Please check our website www.audubongv.org for details about exact meeting location. Starts at 7:00 p.m.

November 18: Annual Grand Valley Waterfowl Field Trip

The group will meet at 8 a.m. at the NW corner of Canyon View Park. We will carpool; drivers will need a Colorado Parks Pass.

November 20: Invasive Plant Removal and Habitat Restoration at Connected Lakes

Pete Firmin, manager at James M. Robb Colorado River State Park, will speak about invasive plant removal efforts at the park and future restoration plans.
First Presbyterian Church, 3940 27 1/2 Road, GJ. 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Save the date for Christmas Bird Count! Mark your calendars-the 2017 CBC will be held on Sunday, December 17, 2017. More info will follow on our website. www.audubongv.org

The President's Corner with Cary Atwood

A Seasonal Shift~

The heat of summer is slowly waning, bringing cooler mornings along with a decrease in daylight. We see the change as hummingbird species decrease at our feeders responding to this photoperiod shift. But we also look forward to seeing birds that briefly pass through our Valley or arrive for the winter months.

Although not part of a major birding flyway, we welcome Rufous Hummingbirds in July. They are on a return trip from their northern breeding grounds in southeast Alaska and British Columbia on route to wintering grounds in Mexico: a 4,000 mile round trip journey! I continue to be in awe of the magic, mysteries and miracle of migration.

As noted on page one, our bird banding program is returning to engage students around the Valley with the wonder of migrating birds and the scientific enterprise of documenting part of their journey. The banding season begins with the arrival of one of our former bird banders, Linnea Rowse, who, along with volunteers, will get the nets up and running by Monday, September 18, our first day with 4th graders.

Other seasonal shifts include the welcome addition of two new board members, Colleen Welch and Leon Thurmon. The Board also will introduce a new Grand Valley Audubon logo and sponsor a contest to rename the Chukar Chatter. GVAS will co-sponsor a Costa Rica birding trip in January with Holbrook Travel to help raise funds to sustain our fall bird banding program. And we're planning an online Art Auction!. Whew!

I hope you will join us for our fall programs and bird counts, or consider volunteering during our bird banding season or with trail and vegetation maintenance on our 57-acres of nature preserve.

Finally, I want to give a shout out of appreciation to our board and committee members, as well as members who have led field trips this spring and summer. I value and appreciate all you do to keep our local chapter growing and strong!

Good birding to all!

Cary Atwood

Time to Rename the Chukar Chatter

With the decision to update the GVAS logo, the board also realized that it would be a good time to align the name of our newsletter with the Great Blue Heron that has, and will continue, to be the icon for our Chapter.

Local artist Sheri Worth developed a number of sketches that served as prototypes for a new logo design. Screech owls and Great Blue Herons were the contenders and the Great Blue won out.



Chukars are great and all, but they are an introduced game bird. The Board is soliciting ideas for a new, bird-themed name for our newsletter that better supports our native species.

Submit your suggestions to gvas.executivecoordinator@gmail.com.

Update on Grants

We have been busy collaborating with partners and applying for grants to fund habitat restoration and other improvement projects on the *Audubon Nature Preserve*. At the end of January we collaborated with Abby Burk of *Audubon Rockies* to submit an application for a Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant from the *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation*. This is a national, and highly competitive, grant program. Although we were NOT in one of the prioritized geographical areas, we felt it was worth a shot. Sadly, we learned at the end of July that we did not receive the grant. But we were the top ranked proposal from the state of Colorado!

In July, with guidance from Matt Reddy at *Ducks Unlimited*, we applied for a Wetlands for Wildlife grant from *Colorado Parks and Wildlife* that would provide funds to assess potential options to improve the wetland habitat on the property and fund the chosen improvements. We expect to hear a decision on this application soon.

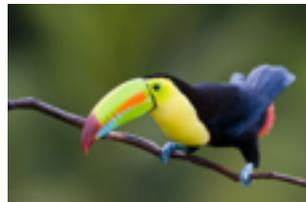
Finally, this past winter, Abby Burk, of *Audubon Rockies* applied for a small grant on our behalf from Patagonia, the outdoor gear company, and was awarded the funding! This grant will fund a volunteer habitat restoration event at the Audubon Nature Preserve. We are currently working with Abby to schedule and organize the event.

Even if we are not ultimately awarded a grant, the process of applying for one is useful. It requires that GVAS define its goals for the property, generate ideas and compile information that make future applications easier and more likely to be successful. We will continue to seek funding to help us make the Audubon Nature Preserve the best bird habitat possible.

Costa Rica Birding

January 25-February 4, 2018

Holbrook Travel is leading a birding adventure to Costa Rica January 25-February 4 with a portion of the trip fees



benefiting GVAS. Mario Cordoba, a local bilingual guide who is an expert at identification by both sight and sound will lead the expedition. More information is available at our website www.audubongv.org.

In Appreciation

Juanita and Bob Moston have *long* been active participants in Grand Valley Audubon. From time as Secretary, Historian, Membership coordinator, organizing book collections (and more!) over many years, Juanita has given much time and energy to our Chapter. Bob has been a regular TUMACANBAC leader for decades. In addition, he has been a Spring and Winter count leader and has NEVER missed a year as a count leader for Western Screech Owls on the CBC. We wish to recognize their selfless dedication to Grand Audubon. We thank you for your dedicated volunteerism!!

ON THE FIFTH DAY

by Jane Hirshfield

On the fifth day
the scientists who studied the rivers
were forbidden to speak
or to study the rivers.
The scientists who studied the air
were told not to speak of the air,
and the ones who worked for the farmers
were silenced,
and the ones who worked for the bees.
Someone, from deep in the Badlands,
began posting facts.
The facts were told not to speak
and were taken away.
The facts, surprised to be taken, were silent.
Now it was only the rivers
that spoke of the rivers,
and only the wind that spoke of its bees,
while the unpausing factual buds of the fruit trees
continued to move toward their fruit.
The silence spoke loudly of silence,
and the rivers kept speaking,
of rivers, of boulders and air.
In gravity, earless and tongueless,
the untested rivers kept speaking.
Bus drivers, shelf stockers,
code writers, machinists, accountants,
lab techs, cellists kept speaking.
They spoke, the fifth day,
of silence.

GVAS is sponsoring an Eagle Scout project whereby old baskets are going to be put up for Long-eared Owls. If you have baskets you can donate to this project, an Eagle Scout will be most grateful. The baskets should be natural materials, not plastic, and roughly 10 inches or more in diameter. Handles are ok as we can remove them. Please bring them to the September 18 program or give them to Nic Korte or Eileen Cunningham or any board member. Thank you!



Bird Friendly Coffee

Did you know that many of our neotropical migrant birds, such as warblers and tanagers, spend their winters in coffee-growing country? Your choice of coffee beans can benefit birds.

Coffee farms can provide good habitat for birds, provided that they cultivate "shade-grown" coffee. Coffee is a shrub and shade-grown coffee is grown under a canopy of native trees. Many coffee experts say that shade-grown coffee is superior to coffee grown in the open because shade-grown coffee beans ripen more slowly and develop superior flavors.

Go to our website <http://www.audubongv.org/bird-friendly-coffee.html> to learn more about shade grown coffee.

Science & Conservation News by Nic Korte

GENERATIONAL AMNESIA: There have been numerous books and essays written regarding our inability to assess change that isn't sudden. The explanation is that cultural evolution is so much more rapid than biological evolution. Anyone out there remember NOT having a cell phone or a word processor? You may remember those days existed, but can you imagine what life was like then? Certainly, my grandchildren will find it difficult to believe that such a world ever existed. This has been called "Generational Amnesia," and referred to by some as "the central psychological problem of our lifetime."

Children in Beijing know that breathing outside air has always made one sick. Young Eskimos believe the sea has always risen into their villages. A fisheries scientist has noted that after populations of large fish collapsed, humans "obliviously" fished for smaller species. This impaired vision also has been called "shifting baseline syndrome."

Nearly all bird populations are in free-fall. I recently wrote about the Yellow-breasted Chat (http://www.gjsentinel.com/blogs/birds_and_more/entry/time-for-a-chat-a-double-entendre-for-earth-day). The population, considered to be about 13 million, has fallen by almost 40% in the past few decades. Such a decrease can't be allowed to continue. Or can it?

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT UNDER DURESS: The current administration considers the Endangered Species Act a failure because so few species are considered "recovered." The definition of "recovery," is quite controversial. On the one hand, economic interests want to see the ESA weakened because it is one of the strongest laws available for environmental protection. Alternately, they also call for "recovery" to be proclaimed for small populations so the act can no longer be invoked.

I saw some of this first-hand recently. My wife and I were in the Texas Hill Country to see, among other species, Black-capped Vireos. The population was believed to be down to a few hundred individuals in the late 80s, but has now recovered to more than



10,000 because of efforts under the ESA. What were those efforts? Land purchases to assure that some habitat remained, and trapping/removal of cowbirds which heavily parasitized their nests. Cowbird parasitism is exacerbated by increasingly patchy habitat. Cattle grazing and fire-suppression also eliminate the brushy habitat needed by the vireo, and encourages cowbirds. There has been a push by economic interests to "delist" the vireo. Yet, it is obvious without continued human intervention (e.g. Cowbird traps and acquired nesting properties managed to prevent grazing and encourage appropriate vegetation), the vireo would not survive.

How does that make you regard the ESA? I don't consider a bird 'recovered' that will require perpetual human intervention as seems to be the case for this vireo. Without the act, the bird would most likely already be extinct. My belief is that many birders, and particularly the general public, do not fully appreciate the extent to which many species are holding on because of human intervention—humans working at their jobs on behalf of the species.

If you think our world needs these jobs and the funding necessary, please let your representatives know that you support a strong ESA!

WHY CAN'T WE BE HONEST?: Do not be misled by those saying the locals were not listened to with the establishment of the Bear's Ear's National Monument. Besides the participation of the local Indian Tribes (those most affected by the designation), there was a public hearing at the site and a long comment period. Several major boundary adjustments were made from the initial proposal after the public hearings and comments. The boundary adjustments were made for the following purposes:

- a uranium mine
- Ute lands that members of that tribe asked to be excluded
- a major local recreation and wood-gathering area
- an area with history of oil development
- an area with history of coal development
- an area with potential for oil and gas development

WHITHER SCIENCE?: The Trump administration has no Presidential Science Advisor— circumstances that have not existed since the position was created in the Eisenhower Administration. The White Office of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) had 9 employees in the Obama Administration. It now has zero. President Obama relied on a well-equipped OSTP during multiple crises, including the [2014 Ebola outbreak](#), the [2011 Fukushima disaster](#), and the [Deepwater Horizon oil spill](#) in 2010. He received regular, often daily briefings on science. There are no science briefings at present. If these conditions concern you, please contact your representatives, and let them know what you think.

Become a Member!

Invite a Friend!

The Grand Valley Audubon Society Local Membership Application

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

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 and mail to PO Box 1211, Grand Jct. CO 81502 or apply on-line at www.audubongv.org.

Join or donate to National Audubon Society directly and receive the AUDUBON Magazine! Call 1-844-428-3826 or go online to www.audubon.org. Use chapter code D04.

Grand Valley Audubon
PO Box 1211
Grand Junction, CO 81502-1211

Website: www.audubongv.org

Check your expiration date!

Renew today!



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The Grand Valley Audubon Society strives 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.