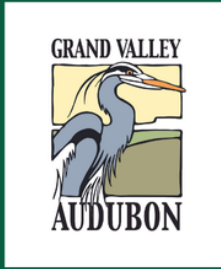


Mid-winter 2026 Great Blue Herald Newsletter



Members & Friends of Grand Valley Audubon Society

ALL THE WORLD'S PUFFINS

Presented by Kristal Stidham



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2026 PROGRAM

Social: 6:30 - 7:00 pm

Poetry & Program: 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Colorado Poet: Alicia Rebecca Myers

"All the World's Puffins" by Kristal Stidham

Kristal Stidham is a current member and former V.P. of the Black Canyon Audubon Society. She recently completed her quest to see all of the world's puffin species. She will share stories and photos from her adventures to Iceland in June of 2025 and Alaska the previous summer.

POET: Alicia Rebecca Myers holds an MFA in Poetry from NYU, where she was a Goldwater Writing Fellow and studied with poet Sharon Olds. Her poem "On the Anniversary of My Due Date, You Ask to Braid My Hair" won the 2025 Cantor Poetry Prize. Her first full-length manuscript, Warble, was chosen as winner of the 2024 Birdy Poetry Prize (Meadowlark Press) and was published in January 2025.

You can read more about her at aliciarebeccamyers.com.

Photo: The Urban Nature Enthusiast, Puffins

UPCOMING BIRD WALK: Sat. Feb. 21, 2026



SANDHILL CRANE FIELD TRIP

Saturday, February 21, 2026, **3:45 pm (not noon)**
Bird Walk with Pamela Johnson

We will carpool to the open fields around the Gunnison River area west of Delta, Colorado. During the winter several thousand Sandhill Cranes roost in this area using the ponds and lakes. Our goal is to be in the area at dusk to watch them fly in for the night.

Meet at the City Market on Orchard Mesa (2770 US-50) on the southwest side of the parking lot near the Wells Fargo Bank kiosk. **Time: 3:45 pm** with a 4:00 departure time. Make this your bathroom stop before we head out. There are none where we are going. The parking will be on side roads so we need to limit our vehicles to 3-4. Dress warm since it will be cold once the sun starts to go down. Feel free to bring binoculars, scopes, and your cameras. This area is next to private property and next to busy roads (G50 Rd, 1250 Rd, and Sawmill Mesa Rd) so we need to be aware of our surroundings.

If you would like to participate in this evening trip, please contact Pam Johnson at 970-523-5443 so that we have a head count. Leave a message with your name and phone number in case I need to reach out to you.



TUMACACBAC
TO-MACK(COLORADO)-AND-BACK
RAPTOR FIELD TRIP SERIES

TRIP 1
JANUARY 24

LEADER:
Brett Walker

TUMACNBAC REPORT

Since 1987, Grand Valley Audubon has hosted raptor viewing trips from Grand Junction "to Mack and back," giving TUMACNBAC its lighthearted name. Every winter in the northwestern end of the Grand Valley, we are graced with a regionally exceptional carnivorous bird diversity. The series was well attended again this year.

Groups this year were able to enjoy finding Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, Red-tail Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Northern Harrier, Prairie Falcon, Cooper's Hawk, Loggerhead Shrike, Great-horned Owl, and Western-screech Owl. The small family unit of Harlan's/dark-morph Red-Tail Hawks persist in an area near L & 20 RD. This year's mild winter did not spur as great numbers or as great diversity of winter raptors as in the past. Rough-Legged Hawk, Merlin, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Northern Shrike were nowhere to be found. - Logan Wagner (*Tumacnbac organizer*)

CONSERVATION BY NIC KORTE

Sustainable Development Goals Rejected: Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals were approved in 2015 by all 193 United Nations (UN) member states. At a UN conference this year, a spokesman stated that the Trump administration "denounces the Agenda for Sustainable Development and will no longer reaffirm" the previous commitment.

Nestbox Success: No group knows better than GVAS the difference nest boxes can make on a bird population, but this time it is not Screech-Owls. I traveled to Amazonian Peru on a fundraiser for the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. I signed up, in part, to visit a parrot lick, where macaws and parrots arrive daily to imbibe clay that enables them to excrete toxins consumed as they forage in the jungle. Heavy rain washed out my opportunity when I visited the area almost twenty years ago. Imagine my chagrin to learn that in the ensuing years, the number of macaws visiting the site had decreased by 2/3. Why? Illegal logging of their nest trees. (Be careful about the source of any wood flooring you may purchase.) The good news is that the birds readily accept artificial nest structures. The unwelcome news; each structure costs ~\$2000. Our group financed one! Anyone wishing to contribute to the program, please contact me. *Nic Korte: nkorte1@hotmail.com*

All That Glitters – Don't let it be gold! My experiences and accommodations in Amazonian Peru were exceptional. Unfortunately, you will see evidence of the absence of governance. Besides the illegal logging mentioned above, illegal gold mining is even more visible. Our local travel was by riverboat. Illegal gold dredges, which ruin the river substrate and pollute the water and sediments with mercury, were common sights – even from regularly used docks. Gold jewelry accounts for about half of the annual production of gold. The solution? Lower demand! Don't buy gold jewelry! Buy something else that is shiny!

Wildfires and Snow Loss: More sad news for the Colorado River Watershed: burned and charred forests within snow-dominated watersheds cause the snow to melt faster because of loss of reflectivity.

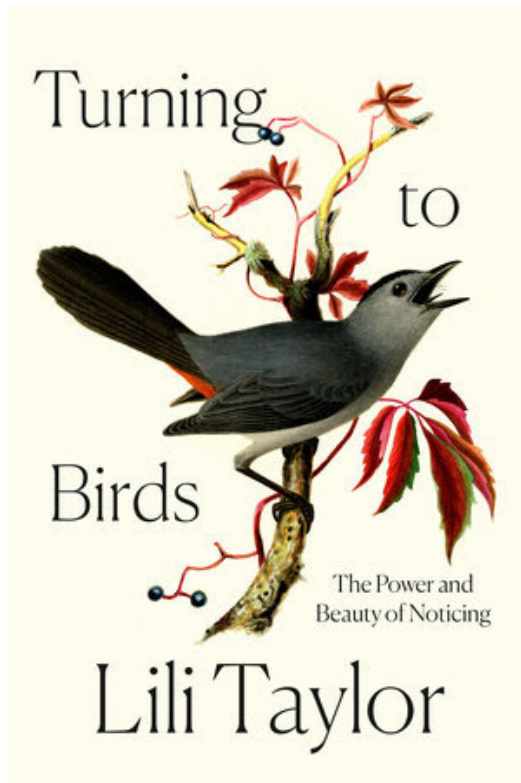
Extinction: Predicted effects of climate change on the oceans are dire. *Acropora* corals have been struggling in the Atlantic such that replanting efforts have been undertaken. Unfortunately, a 2023 acute heating event caused extinction of both wild and replanted *acropora* corals in the Florida keys.

Don't Drink the Yellow River: No, this is not like the joke about yellow snow! As permafrost thaws throughout Alaska and Northern Canada, bedrock is exposed to air causing conversion of certain sulfides to sulfuric acid. The acid dissolves metals trapped in the rock releasing iron, aluminum, cadmium, copper, nickel, and zinc at toxic levels. More than 600 miles of streams in Alaska's Brooks Range have been affected already.

A BOOK REVIEW: By Nic Korte

Turning to Birds: The Power and Beauty of Noticing

by Lili Taylor



Turning to Birds: The Power and Beauty of Noticing by Lili Taylor.

I am not a fan of cities. The idea of books by celebrities is off-putting. I am not attracted to the idea of monitoring a pair of nesting catbirds in a noisy New York City park or racing to the top of a skyscraper at night because BirdCast predicted a major migration event. Nonetheless, I was beguiled by actress and Audubon Board Member Lili Taylor's love letter to birds and birding. Here are her words from a windy, spring night atop the Empire State Building: "I watch birds stream toward the vanishing point on the horizon and am filled with ecstasy and desire and sorrow. Sometimes I don't want to live, or I don't know how to live, or don't know why. These migrating birds don't ask why. They're moved by the force of life, and I'm moved by them." This brief volume is a prose poem celebrating nature. You will not learn any new facts about birds, but you may understand a little more why you love them.

CHECK OUT THE PRESERVE UPDATES



Preserve Project in the works: Entryway into the fish kettle from the Colorado River.



View southward into the kettle area - with the river behind the photographer!

The Preserve Project: the purpose of the fish kettle is to capture fish from the Colorado River and keep only native fish to grow out in the waters of the North Pond, allowing them to mature and grow for eventual re-release back in the Colorado River.



Another view of the internal kettle area.

Photos by Cary Atwood



River water seeping into the kettle area

(looking north).

VIDEO ON THE PRESERVE PROJECT!

[Click here for The Preserve Updates and information from Meredith Walker - Part I.](#)

[Click here for Part 2.](#)

Check the website for more information.

The Wetlands Project

The Audubon Nature Preserve is fully closed both north and south of Dike Road for your safety due to the active construction mentioned above. While Phase 2 should be finished soon, the area south of Dike Rd will continue to be a staging area for construction north of the road. We appreciate your patience! Once construction is complete, which we estimate to be later this winter, we will reopen the property to the public

OTHER BIRD HAPPENINGS IN COLORADO

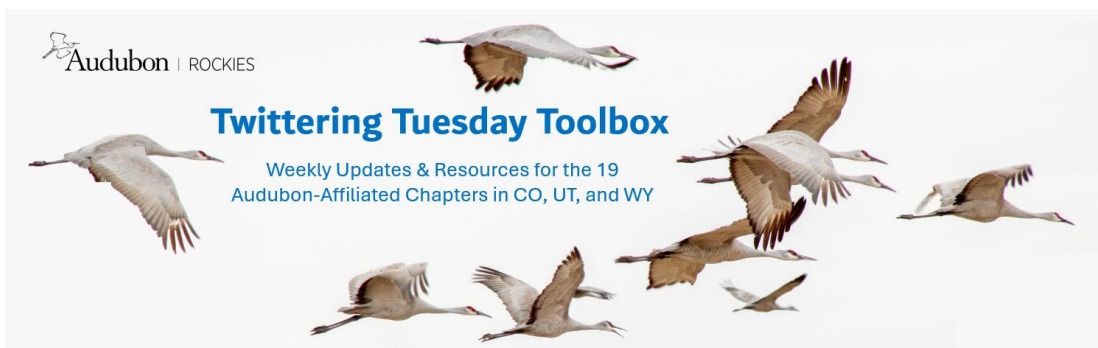


The graphic is a promotional poster for the Monte Vista Crane Festival. On the left, it features a logo with two cranes flying over a sun and mountains, with the text "MONTE VISTA CRANE FESTIVAL" and the tagline "- where the cranes meet the mountains -". Above the logo, it says "March 6-8, 2026". To the right, there is a large image of cranes flying over a mountain range. Text on this image includes "Craft & Nature Fair • Art Workshops • Tours • Crane Viewing!" and "Join us March 6-8 in beautiful Monte Vista, to witness thousands of Sandhill Cranes, ducks, and geese against the backdrop of the towering peaks of the San Luis Valley." On the far right, there is a vertical strip of three smaller photos showing people engaged in various activities at the festival.

"Save the Date" for the [Monte Vista Crane Festival](#)
March 6-8, in Monte Vista, CO

Fun opportunity to see large numbers of Sandhill Cranes (Greater and Lesser sp.) in the beautiful San Luis Valley. Approximately 23,000-27,000 pass thru on spring/fall migration over the course of a few weeks. In addition to witnessing the majesty of cranes (and their wily behaviors!), there is a plethora of art and photography workshops, top-notch guest speakers, and conservation organizations tabling at the event. [See the website for more details!](#)

Additionally, the [Weminuche Audubon Society](#) (WAS) chapter and Audubon Rockies staff will be presenting on Sunday, March 8th from 11:00-11:50 am at the event. The talk is entitled "**Crossing the Divide**" and is a result of some of the great relationships we've established with the FWS refuge staff and [Friends of the SLV's National Wildlife Refuge](#) club members.



The graphic features the Audubon Rockies logo in the top left corner. The main title is "Twittering Tuesday Toolbox" in a large, bold, blue font. Below the title, it says "Weekly Updates & Resources for the 19 Audubon-Affiliated Chapters in CO, UT, and WY". The background is a light blue gradient with several white cranes in flight, scattered across the scene.

- **Bird-Friendly Garden Design:** Planning, Prep, and Practical Ideas – Wednesday, March 4th @ 12 pm
- **Stream & Wetland Restoration Projects in CO:** Rockies and the *Healthy Headwaters Working Group* are hosting a webinar on how Colorado's new dredge and fill program applies to stream and wetland restoration projects in the state.
- **Article by Abby Burk** on how Colorado leads the nation in adopting a backstop for stream and wetland safeguards.
- **What does the Colorado River have to do with your favorite local beer?** More than you might think. Join us on **Wednesday, Feb. 25, 6:30 pm** for a special tour at Palisade Brewing Company to learn how drought, water management and the Colorado River impact everything we do — and drink — here in the Grand Valley.

[RSVP: Palisade Brewing Company - 200 Peach Ave., Palisade, CO 81526](#)



The Do's and Don'ts of Helping Baby and Injured Birds

Wildlife Rescue:

Pauline S. Schneegas Wildlife Foundation:

www.psswf.org/ (970)876-5676

psswildlifefoundation@gmail.com

[Click here to read article!](#)

Help Us Find New Locations For Bird Walks!

Bird Walks are one of Grand Valley Audubon Society's most popular events and Pam Johnson is the Bird Walk Organizer.

But she needs your help! Can you identify an area for a possible walk? When is a good time of year to watch the birds in this area?

Click to download a [BirdWalkworkSheet.docx](#) to complete and return to Pam using the email or phone number below. She will contact you for clarification and details. Dates and times will be posted into the calendar on the website and the newsletter. She hopes to organize two walks a month.

Send your suggestions to Pam Johnson at mcandjohn91@gmail.com.

You can also leave her a message at 970-523-5443. Thank you for all you do to support Grand Valley Audubon Society!



Grand Valley Audubon Society strives to foster an appreciation for birds and other wildlife, preserve a diversity of habitats, and advocate for a sustainable healthy environment through education, research and individual action.

The Grand Valley Audubon Nature Preserve

Location: [610 Dike Road, Grand Junction, 81507](#)

(just before the entrance to Connected Lakes State Park)

Contact address: GVAS, P.O. Box 1211, Grand Junction, CO 81502

**The Grand Valley Audubon Society is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit based in
Grand Junction, Colorado. Tax ID #23-7205741.**

This email was sent to tinawilson2656@gmail.com. [Click here to unsubscribe.](#)
