

GRAND VALLEY



AUDUBON

Great Blue Herald

Grand Valley Audubon Society

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

P.O. Box 1211, Grand Junction, CO 81502 / www.audubongv.org

Fall Bird Banding 2023. Weekdays: September 18 thru October 13

By Cary Atwood

The Lucky Amongst Us..... Fourth graders who arrive on a school bus, or walkers who stumble upon the temporary bird banding station at Connected Lakes State Park are very lucky people. They are amongst those who have a special opportunity to view up close, tiny, living songbirds, weighing in at just a few grams. For a brief few minutes of their lives, these songbirds on their migratory journeys southward become the focus of scientific data collection. They are examined, measured, aged, identified, admired, sometimes the focus of a brief lesson, and often photographed. This last magical moment: briefly lingering on an open palm before returning to the wild.

The banding station is no more than a collection of tables, a box of specialized tools and embossed bands, a copy of [Peter Pyle's Guide to North American Birds](#) and a collection of mist nets set up in the nearby dense understory among cottonwood trees, oak and three-leaf sumac.

What enlivens and energizes this outdoor space is the small group of enthusiastic and competent volunteers, who along with the bander, arrive before dawn to open nets, capture, data collect and carefully release each of the hundreds of songbirds, both resident and migrant caught in mist nets during this month-long scientific endeavor. In addition, expert bird banding educators

help students deepen scientific connections about migration and adaptations of these tiny, but mighty migrants.



Photos by Cary Atwood, 2022 Bird Banding

These efforts are led by an experienced bird bander who holds a permit to do this important data collection work. This year we welcome Emily Knaack who comes with broad experience banding birds in other states. Hard working volunteers not only walk the 12 net "run" of temporary nets set up nearby every 30 minutes, but they must quickly and accurately record data on each bird. The bander first attaches a loose metal band on the bird's leg, then ages each bird, along with collecting weight and other body measurements. All data is recorded on forms

at the banding table and eventually transmitted to the National Bird Banding Lab in Maryland. For over 100 years, these records have helped scientists determine trends in bird populations, migration, lifespans and conservation decisions.

Continued on back page....



JOIN THE NEW DIMENSIONS Class – 9/25/23
A Field Trip to the Fall Bird Banding Station.
More: registration.newdimensionsgj.org

CONSERVATION NEWS! By Nic Korte

Brown-capped Rosy Finches – Good News X2:

The SUMMER 2023 issue of BIRD CONSERVATION, published by the American Bird Conservancy conveyed excellent news concerning the almost-endemic-to-Colorado, Brown-Capped Rosy Finch. A familiar bird to summer alpine enthusiasts, their population was believed to be in trouble. It turns out, the problem was lack of data. A recent study, described as “walking slowly and looking for birds on 45-degree rock slopes, on unstable footing and crumbling rock,” estimates the population to be a healthy 115,000 to 150,000; three times what was estimated in 2016. The study found rosy finches prefer cliffs and snow patches between 11,500 and 13,200 feet. The other good news is for birders/listers. Scientists published the entire genomes for all three rosy finches and concluded that “they should continue to be considered separate species.” There is bad news, however. Another 2 degrees Celsius of global warming would eliminate 99% of their habitat. *(photo: Cornell Lab of Ornithology)*



What Good is the Merlin App?

It helps identify birds, right? But that is not why it was developed. At the recent Colorado Field Ornithologists Conference, I heard a presentation by one of Merlin’s developers. As researchers, they were spurred into action by seeing the data from eBird. What did it show about birds? Decline. Decline. Decline. What to do? How about developing a tool to connect anyone to birds? The more people that are connected, the more people that care, the better for birds went the reasoning. Here is my challenge to you. Go to a non-birding neighbor or family member and take their phone and download Merlin. Show them how easy it is to use. That is one more connection!

98 Degrees in the Florida Keys:

That sounds like the lyrics to a Jimmy Buffett song. Unfortunately, it is the highest temperature ever recorded, by five degrees (!), for the ocean surrounding South Florida. This is devastating for corals and other sea life. At the same time, Grand Valley birders are noticing a lack of flycatchers and swallows compared to even a decade in the past. The diversity is the same, but numbers are down. So called “wake-up calls” regarding climate and overall environmental change are still mostly ignored. **What can you do? Vote! Write letters! Donate! Do Not Give Up!**

Where To Donate: The glacial speed with which the political process is addressing climate change suggests that the best way to ensure species diversity in a changing world is to target your funds for the acquisition and/or protection of land. Groups in the Americas effectively preserving habitat include the American Bird Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, ProAves and the Jocotoco Foundation. There are many examples worldwide. Find a species or location you are passionate about and help out!

Bureau of Livestock and Mining:

It is often suggested that BLM stands for the title of this section rather than Bureau of Land Management. Most BLM lands lack protection from oil and gas, mining, and other extractive industries. Despite a mandate to manage the land for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations, the BLM has never established comprehensive regulations addressing conservation. For example, ten years after initiating planning for Colorado’s Uncompahgre management unit, the BLM’s final plan opened 95 percent of the land to oil and gas leasing.



Despite reporting that more than 185,000 acres met the agency’s requirements for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), only 190 acres were designated. *(photo: Scott Braden/Conservation Colorado, Uncompahgre Plateau)*

These decisions illustrate why the conservation community supports the Biden administration’s proposed requirements that elevate conservation as equal to resource extraction and would direct the BLM to conserve intact landscapes and to manage for ecosystem resilience – including designating additional ACECs. Mesa County Commissioners wrote a strongly worded letter asking BLM not to make any management changes. A weekly columnist in the GJ Daily Sentinel said the proposed rule would turn BLM lands into “no use” areas. Birders, campers, hikers, hunters, and many others disagree.

<https://birdsandmore.blog/>

AUDUBON PRESERVE

WE NEED YOU TO BIRD THE AUDUBON PRESERVE!

by Meredith Swett Walker

GVAS’s Wetlands Improvement Project

is moving along with work on Traylor Pond expected this fall/winter and work on North Pond coming next year. Along with our partners, we’ve worked hard to secure funding from state and federal agencies and now *we need your help!*

Many of the grants we received require that we monitor birds before and after wetland habitat improvement – that’s where you come in – all you have to do is bird the Audubon Nature Preserve and submit an eBird checklist. There is one extra important step: please note which pond or wetland you saw the birds using in the box on your eBird screen that says “Add details about this observation.” Because some ponds, like Osprey, have already been converted into wetland habitat, but others haven’t yet; we need to know which pond/wetland the birds are observed on to determine how the birds are responding. eBird data goes into



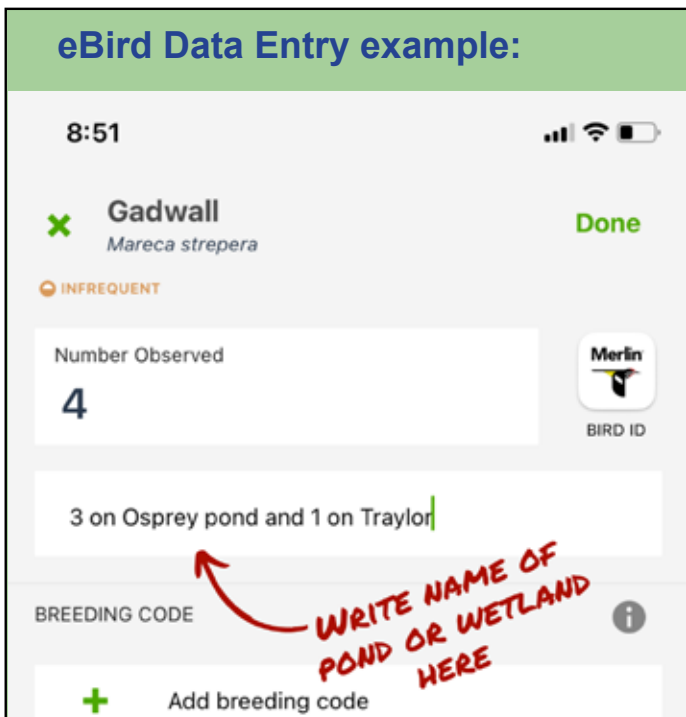
a searchable, public database so whenever we need to write a grant report and document how birds are using the habitat, we can access data from the preserve.

NOTE: it’s important to gather this data BEFORE and AFTER we do work on the wetlands, so the time to start is now! The map shows you the name of each pond and wetland on the Audubon Nature Preserve and the screenshot shows you where on the eBird data entry screen you should put pond/wetland information.

Download the eBird App on your mobile phone!

Help us to Bird The Preserve! Be on the lookout for waterfowl, shorebirds and other waterbirds and if you can make note of which pond or wetland you see them on in the [eBird](#) comments that will be especially helpful. Bird the preserve before, during, and after Phase 2 and 3 construction – all of those timepoints are important.

www.AudubonGV.org



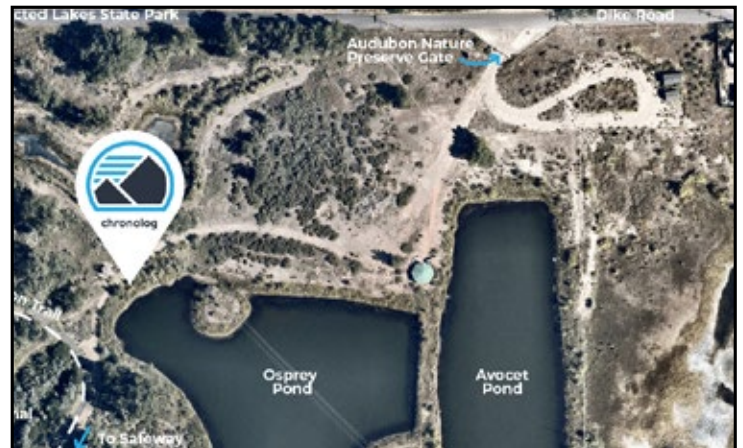
AUDUBON PRESERVE

GVAS's NEW Chronolog Station! We Want Your Photos!

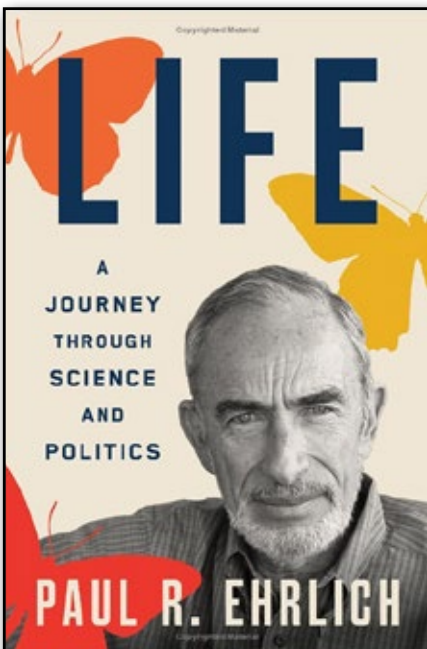
by Logan Walker



Now located in the Grand Valley Audubon Preserve a few steps off of the paved trail, north of the Osprey pond is a brand new Chronolog station! The wooden post is equipped with instructions to use a phone camera bracket that allows visitors to collect visual data of our always-changing wetlands restoration area. The submitted photos are instantaneously added to a timelapse that provides an important reference to pair with ongoing bird data. It will allow us to better manage water levels that will benefit the greatest diversity of waterfowl. Go give it a whirl!



BOOK REVIEW by Nic Korte



Life: A Journey Through Science and Politics *by Paul R. Ehrlich*

Paul Ehrlich, best known for his authorship of the notorious THE POPULATION BOMB, is one of my heroes. Opponents have long discredited the entirety of his work based on, as Ehrlich freely admits, the inaccuracy of the scenarios presented in the book. Ehrlich's adversaries have ignored the fact that his overall concepts and warnings have proven correct. Besides many entertaining personal anecdotes, Ehrlich's new memoir illustrates the unusual breadth of his award-winning research career. A significant part of his work was performed in Colorado where he discovered a keystone species complex in our aspen forests. "The complex depended on four keystone elements –sapsuckers, aspens, willows, and a fungus – without all of them, the ecosystem would greatly change." The book describes the life of one who, decades ago, recognized the magnitude of our environmental problems and dedicated his life to attempting their mitigation.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

NEW THIS YEAR: Each meeting will begin with poetry by a Colorado poet. Wendy Videlock, our Western Slope Poet Laureate, is coordinating Colorado poets for our upcoming programs. Sit back and enjoy!



SEPTEMBER MEETING – WHITE-TAILED PRAIRIE DOGS ECO-SYSTEM IMPORTANCE

Monday, Sept. 18, 2023

Social : 6:30-7:00 pm

Program: 7:00-7:30 pm

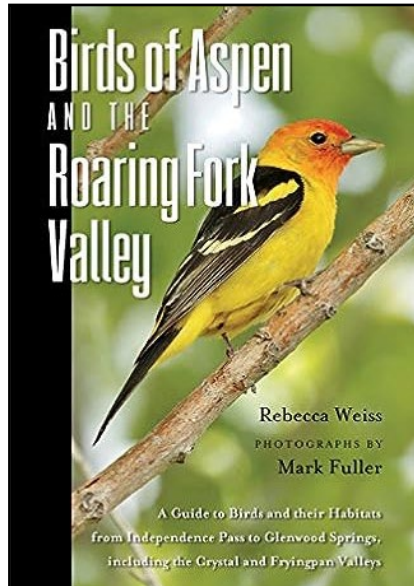
Presented by Janet Wyatt and Eric Rechel of Desert Ecosystem Analysis & Restoration

An invocation poem by Mindy Rice of Parachute will begin the evening program.

The program introduces Prairie Dogs and their role in the Eco-System.

Monthly Meeting Information:

Grand Valley Audubon Society meets the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the First Presbyterian Church, located at 3940 27 1/2 Rd, Grand Junction, CO 81506.



OCTOBER MEETING – BIRDS OF ASPEN AND THE ROARING FORK VALLEY FIELD GUIDE

Monday, October 16, 2023

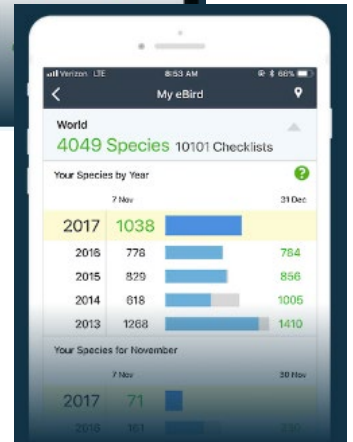
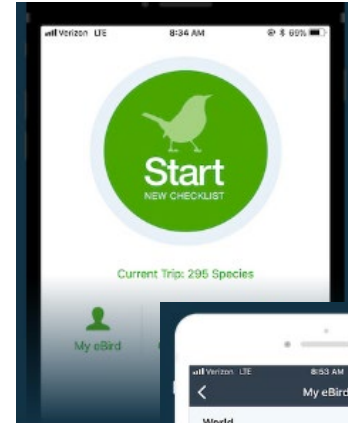
6:30-7:00 pm Social / 7:00-

7:30 pm Program

Presented by Mark Fuller and Rebecca Weiss

Poetry by a Colorado poet will be presented before the program.

Mark Fuller and Rebecca Weiss will present their revised field guide, *Birds of Aspen and the Roaring Fork Valley: A Guide to Birds and Their Habitats from Independence Pass to Glenwood Springs, including the Crystal and Fryingpan Valleys.*



NOVEMBER MEETING – eBIRD APP USAGE

Monday, Nov. 20, 2023

Social: 6:00-7:00 pm

Program: 7:00-8:00 pm

Presented by Logan Wagner

Poetry by a Colorado poet will be presented before the program.

eBird Mobile makes it easy to record the birds you find and seamlessly link observations with eBird – a global online database of bird records used by hundreds of thousands of birders around the world. This free resource helps you keep track of your birding activity, while making your data openly available for scientific research, education, and conservation. eBird Mobile is the only app that passes information directly from your mobile device to your eBird account on the web.

GRAND VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY MISSION STATEMENT

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

Sign-up by Aug. 27th!
BIRDING TRIP:
 Nov. 30 - Dec. 9, 2023



ECUADOR

Birding the Chocó-Andes Region

with *Grand Valley Audubon*

NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 9, 2023

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the Chocó ecoregion across a variety of protected areas, including Yanacocha Biological Reserve, Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve, Milpe Bird Sanctuary, Antisana Ecological Reserve, and others.
- Visit the famed Refugio Paz de las Aves, known as a haven for antpittas and Andean Cocks-of-the-rock.
- Meet a representative from a community project dedicated to restoring the habitat of the Black-breasted Puffleg, the official emblematic bird of Quito.
- Bird the Mashpi-Amagusa Reserve for target species like the Rose-faced Parrot, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Chocó Vireo, Moss-backed Tanager, and Indigo Flowerpiercer.

Grand Valley Audubon

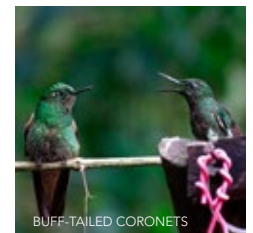
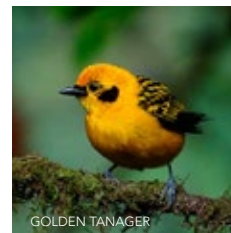
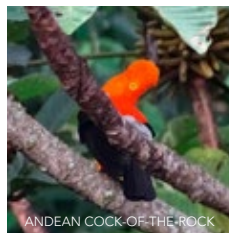
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION
 OR TO ENROLL BY AUG. 27TH:**
 Shannon Young: mtngirl1111@gmail.com

Visit holbrook.travel/gva-ec23 or
 Kevin Van Dien at
kevin@holbrooktravel.com / 877-295-7927



GVAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Treasurer: Larry Collins, lcollins1@bresnan.net
Secretary: Janet Gellenstein, jagbell2@gmail.com

Past President: Cary Atwood, catwood814@gmail.com

Preserve Mgr: Chuck Hunt, codysmokeybear@yahoo.com

Conservation: Nic Korte, nkorte1@hotmail.com

Coordinator: Pam Lauman, pamggl@gmail.com

Social Media: Logan Wagner, loganwagnerdesign@gmail.com

Wetlands Project Coordinator: Meredith Swett Walker,
mbswett@gmail.com

Website & Newsletter: Tina Wilson, tinawilson2656@gmail.com

Bird Banding 2023 – Weekdays: Sept. 18 thru Oct. 13

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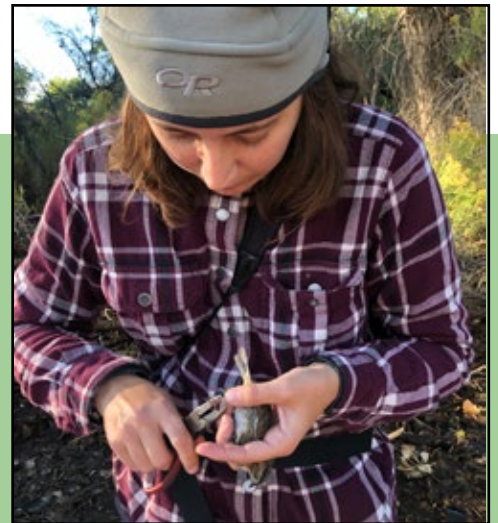
And those lucky fourth graders? Over the past two decades, we have hosted thousands of students on a field trip to the banding station, we underwrite the transport and other costs for hiring a bander and two educators for this month-long endeavor. In the school of the great outdoors they experience wild birds, imagine and play out some of the challenges of migration and become acquainted with the wildlife and riparian habitat of the Grand Valley.



We owe immense gratitude to all those who are paying members of Grand Valley Audubon, as well as long time benefactors who have given generously to keep this program sustainable.

NEW DIMENSIONS CLASS – Field Trip to the Fall Bird Banding Station

The epic journey of bird migrations is one of the most remarkable phenomenon in our natural world. Each fall, here in Connected Lakes State Park, a bird banding station, (one of thousands) is set up to capture, band and release migratory songbirds that pass through the Grand Valley. Much of what we know about migration comes from the tiny aluminum anklets banded birds wear on their travels. You will witness migration in a new way with a visit to the bird banding station. We will be up close to these wild birds as a bird biologist takes us through the process of capture, banding and release and how bird banding aids in deep scientific research and bird conservation. You might even have the opportunity to hold and release one...it's magical.



Monday, September 25th, 2023

Time: 8am-10am

**Connected Lakes State Park
25 participants max**

**More specific details will be sent to
participants**

Register at: <https://registration.newdimensionsgj.org/>