

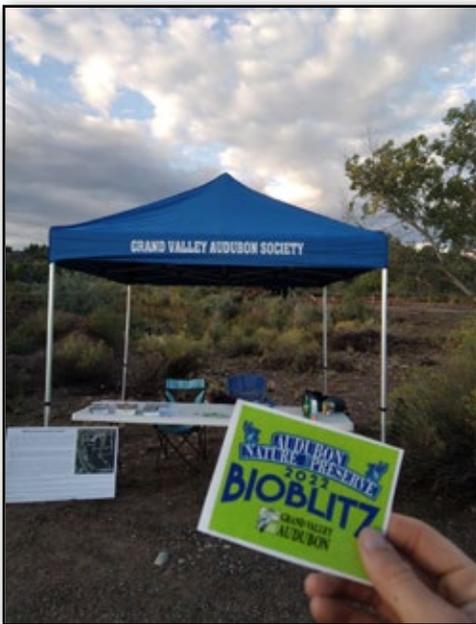


# Great Blue Herald

Grand Valley Audubon Society  
GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

## Audubon Nature Preserve BioBlitz

BY LOGAN WAGNER



On Saturday, September 17th, the Grand Valley Audubon Society held a public BioBlitz nature scavenger hunt event at the Audubon Nature Preserve at 610 Dike Rd in Grand Junction. Throughout the day, about 40 people participated in the event, including bird and botany walks led by local experts.

A **BioBlitz** is a “big day” where expert and novice naturalists alike set out to photograph and identify as many different species as possible in a given area for a day. All types of life are countable, including birds, insects, plants, reptiles, mammals, fish, fungi, microorganisms, and more. The resulting photos and identification data is compiled using iNaturalist, a smartphone app, which allows us to summarize the results. BioBlitz events are held in many communities throughout the world, but this was the first one ever held in the Grand Valley.

That day, 245 photos were taken and 128 species were identified. Birding highlights included solitary sandpiper, warbling vireo, common nighthawk, and western grebe. We also detected some unusual plant species that haven't been observed on the preserve for a number of years, including Arizona century and grand redstem. Tamarisk beetles, a biocontrol against tamarisk, were located in the area where they have never been released, presumably by migrating up the river corridor and onto the property.



*Flame Skimmer Dragonfly*

This species list has identified some conservation actions that we can explore on the property in order to improve our wetlands area and the fascinating organisms in it. For instance, finding the tamarisk beetle means we will have to aid the underbrush succession in order to outcompete invasives like knapweed and tumbleweed. In the case of the century and redstem, it shows how regionally unique the preserve's pond banks and mudflats are. We also found that performing this thorough survey was a great way to monitor invasive encroachment, as well as ephemeral annuals and migrators. We look forward to continuing this event annually to gain yearly insights, as well as introducing more people to the Audubon Nature Preserve and the wonderful nature it contains.

The Grand Valley Audubon Society's gratitude goes to Debra Conklin, Nic Korte, Meredith Swett Walker, Pam Lauman and all of the observers and identifiers for making this inaugural event a great success.

*Solitary Sandpiper*



### Grand Valley Audubon 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.

# BIRDS AND WORDS FROM THE BOARD



*Great Blue Heron*

A few months back, I was so privileged to be highlighted in the Daily Sentinel's Friends and Neighbor's feature.. It was there I shared my intention of stepping down from the role of President of Grand Valley Audubon. Our hardworking and generous board members took on the

task of dividing up and shouldering the many responsibilities I had taken on over the years. In addition, it was a very good leadership lesson for me. Over time I had neglected my

responsibility to delegate, delegate, delegate!

I am happy to report that leadership is resting now more equitably between all of our board members, and I am feeling lighter and more optimistic about our chapter's future. Stepping down does not mean stepping back, as all of us on the board have our areas of passion. For me, it is to continue supporting our Wetlands Restoration Project and to keep our education outreach alive through our fall bird banding program. Thank you board members for your energy and commitment in keeping Grand Valley Audubon viable and strong! – Cary Atwood

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER MEETING

**Monday, Oct. 17, 2022 at 3pm**

**What:** Tour the Palisade Insectary Facility

**Where:** 750 37 8/10 Rd., Palisade, CO 81526.

**What:** Join Dr. Dan Bean and team of Biological Control Specialists on a tour. Check the website for full details.

**Contact:** Insectary Facility  
(970) 464-7916

### NOVEMBER BIRD WALK

**Monday, November 7, 2022**

Time and place will be available later. Check the website/enews.

**Contact:** Pam Lauman  
970-379-4872  
pamggl@gmail.Com

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

**Sunday, December 18, 2022**

Grand Junction - for details check the website/enews.

**Tuesday, January 1, 2023**

Mesa CBC - for details check the website/enews.

## MEMBERSHIP INFO

Currently Grand Valley Audubon Society has 129 local members but there are over 600 Audubon National members that live in our area! We are looking to find ways to attract some of the National members to join our local organization.

We are currently working to improve our membership system including notifying people when their local membership expires, when their local membership is up for renewal, and when credit card payments fail due to expired cards.

### **IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT?**

You can check your account standing by going to

**<http://www.audubongv.org>. Click on Join GVAS Today.** Then login to your existing account. Check your membership start and end date.

We appreciate your support!

## GVAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Larry Collins, Treasurer**

**Janet Gellenstein, Secretary**

**Cary Atwood**

**Pam Lauman**

**Chuck Hunt, Preserve**

**Nic Korte, Conservation**

**Logan Wagner, Social Media**

**Hunter Harmon, CMU**

**Meredith Swett Walker, Wetlands Project Coordinator**

**Tina Wilson, Website/enews**

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## SCIENCE & CONSERVATION NEWS By Nic Korte

### THE FATHER OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT HAS DIED –

If the name **James Lovelock** means anything to you, it is probably because of his “Gaia Hypothesis,” which postulates that the Earth functions as a self-regulating system. I was fortunate to hear Lovelock speak nearly 40 years ago at a meeting of the American Chemical Society. You see, Lovelock invented the electron capture detector (ECD). Before that detector, it was not possible to measure tiny concentrations of pesticides such as DDT and many other environmental contaminants. That’s why he can be considered the “*Father of the Environmental Movement*.” These accomplishments barely describe his remarkable career. If you have time, look up his Wikipedia entry. This legendary scientist died in July at 103.

### THEY HAD NO IDEA ABOUT DINOSAURS –

An editorial in *SCIENCE*, 20 July 2022 discussed recent Supreme Court activity. Indeed, I write this as we await a ruling with enormous implications, that is, what constitutes “Waters of the United States.” Previous cases, decided favorably for the environment, have drawn strong conservative dissent. Should the latter sentiment prevail this time, as expected, the Clean Water Act will have been gutted.

*Several quotes from the editorial are noteworthy:*

“Science and technology marched ahead against a backdrop of devotion to a set of founding documents that didn’t contemplate any of these advances.” ... “The courts recent spate of bad decisions mocks scientific facts.” ... “Apparently they couldn’t find any support in the Constitution for environmental regulation” ... “The scientific community must value and partner with communicators and policy-makers who can help show that scientific advancement demands that the nation operate as a work in progress. Otherwise, America will be stuck with a government that worships a set of documents created by men who had no idea about evolution, dinosaurs, hydrocarbons, women’s health, or digital communication.” ... “There’s a great deal to be said for constitutional stability, for relying on the constitution as the expression of a set of foundational principles. But reading it as a Bible for solving the problems of the 21st century? The shortcomings are overwhelming.”

### THE MOST UNUSUAL BIRDS ARE THE MOST AT RISK: –

Two recent research studies independently reported that birds most likely to become extinct contribute most to an ecosystem’s diversity of sizes, shapes, and behaviors. These unique species provide possibly irreplaceable functions. Damage to biodiversity, therefore, will be greater than a simple tally of species lost.

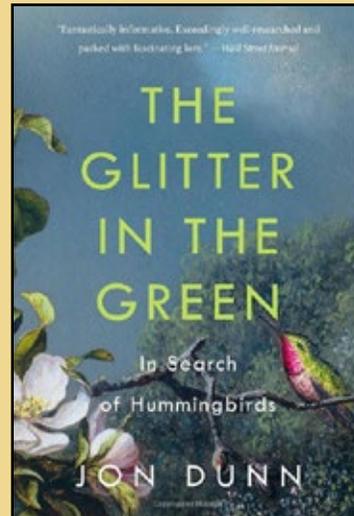
### PROTECTIONS OVERLOOK AT-RISK TREES –

One-third of 60,000 tree species are at risk for extinction because of clearing land for agriculture, logging, and climate change. The majority of threatened trees are under-represented in botanical collections and reserves.

### HUMMINGBIRD PLUMAGE –

Hummingbird feathers have more color diversity than all other species combined. Recent research with museum specimens documented wavelengths of light reflected. Unsurprisingly, the “new” colors were mostly found on crowns and throats – some of them are only visible to other hummingbirds.

### BOOK REVIEW: THE GLITTER IN THE GREEN BY JON DUNN



Jon Dunn’s admiration for hummingbirds is illustrated by the following quote: “They are, perhaps, the ultimate embodiment of evolution’s power to carve a niche for a delicate creature in even the harshest of places.” The author searched for hummingbirds from Alaska to Patagonia, from the high Andes to remote islands. I read the book to re-live some

of my own sightings and to be thrilled by some I have missed. I was not disappointed. I admired the author for not shying away from describing those species of which “only a few hundred remain,” or those that “likely will go extinct in twenty years.” Hopefully readers will be inspired to support groups (*e.g. Rainforest Trust, American Bird Conservancy*) who work to save these uniquely American species.

**RENEW your Membership  
for 2023 online at  
[www.AudubonGV.org](http://www.AudubonGV.org)**

**JOIN**

## MIGRATION SCIENCE & MAGIC

### A Day at the Connected Lakes Bird Banding Station

By Cary Atwood



Each weekday morning before sunrise, Megan Miller and a cadre of dedicated volunteers open the thirteen mist nets spread throughout the dense foliage at Connected Lakes State Park. She's preparing to capture unsuspecting migratory birds as they rest and eat before continuing their southward migration journey. From the jaunty black caps and brilliant yellow plumage of diminutive Wilson's Warblers to the ruffled and squirmy local Spotted Towhees and Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays, they all receive much the same treatment at the Connected Lakes Bird Banding Station.

From mid-September to mid-October each year, a pop-up field science station exists here to sample all birds captured in the nets. Along with identification, Megan weighs, measures, ages, takes a sample tailfeather and bands each bird's wrist before releasing it within a few minutes of capture. A unique number on the band reveals time and location when banded, if the bird is caught again. She is adept at handling wild birds, having banded thousands during her work at numerous banding stations. She will use a bander's grip while swiftly processing all the measurements

and relaying the data to volunteers who record it by hand. Once complete, she holds the bird in a photographer's grip so all can pause in the magical presence and proximity of this wild bird, weighing mere grams, before releasing it. It's a good day of banding if she catches and releases 4-5 birds per hour until closing the nets at 1pm.

When fourth graders arrive from across the Grand Valley on this popular half day "School of the Great Outdoors" field trip, they are enthusiastically welcomed by veteran teachers, Nancy Slipka and Carol Serrano-Treider. Nancy leads students on an interactive habitat walk helping them sharpen their observation skills and use binoculars. Before they play an interactive migration game, they discuss migration hazards, both natural and manmade. Afterwards: a post-game discussion. At the banding station, students witness Megan banding a captured bird as Carol explains the importance of bird banding, shows students a mist net and draws students out with questions for them about bird characteristics. By the time students depart at midday, they've been privileged to see scientific research in action, deepen their understanding of migration, learn about local riparian habitat and witness a little bit of magic getting close to wild birds.

*Left: Megan Miller shows a group of Fourth Graders how to identify a bird during this fall's Bird Banding days. Photo by Cary Atwood.*

*Right: Getting prepped for identification. Photo by Pam Lauman.*



*The GVAS Bird Banding Station, supported by the expertise of Bird Conservancy of the Rockies has been collecting data for approximately 20 years. This was a banner bird collection year, with several surprise captures, including a Hammond's Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, several Hermit Thrush, a Yellow-Breasted Chat and a Lincoln's Sparrow. On the abundance side, over 100 White-Crowned Sparrows, 20 American Robins and Spotted Towhees, and the expected groups of Bushtits (35) In all, approx. 30 species were documented.*

## PROGRAM REVIEW

**Falconry with Kevin Humphreys**

By Pam Lauman



Kevin Humphreys, a master falconer, explained the ancient art of falconry at the Grand Valley Audubon Society meeting on September 19. Falconry is the hunting of wild animals in their natural state and habitat by means of a trained bird of prey. Kevin discussed the history of falconry, species and equipment used, regulations,

and conservation. He has practiced falconry since 1975 and brought a magnificent Russian Goshawk named Jessica. He has more birds at his home between Montrose and Ridgway. Kevin welcomes visitors to see his birds in action. If interested, please contact Pam Lauman at [pamggl@gmail.com](mailto:pamggl@gmail.com).

Photo by Sentinel staff. See related story in the Daily Sentinel.

## Birding the Choco-Andes Region Preliminary Plans for Equador in Nov. 2023

***“Do you have a burning desire to head for parts unknown, or increase your bird life list?”***

Shannon Young is working on a possible trip to Equador next year with Holbrook Travel. Our Audubon members have gone as a group in the past, to Colombia and Costa Rica.

These trips have been educational,

insightful and fun! She is looking in the Choco-Andes Region for November 2023! Go to [HolbrookTravel.com](http://HolbrookTravel.com) to see location ideas.

**For more information send an email to Shannon: [mtngirl1111@gmail.com](mailto:mtngirl1111@gmail.com).**



*Moss-backed Tanagers at Amagusa Reserve. Photo by Debbie Jordan.*

## VOLUNTEERING

### Interested in doing more with GVAS?

GVAS is working to increase activities but we need more volunteers to accomplish this. We really appreciate all the incredible volunteers we currently have and our ten Board of Directors but time limits our ability to do more. We are trying to expand our programs and events.

Here are some activities where volunteers currently help:

- Audubon Nature Preserve
- Bluebird boxes
- Bird banding
- Bird walks
- Screech owl boxes
- Christmas count
- Spring count
- Financials
- Board meetings and committees

We would like to have more help in these areas plus programming, membership, and future ideas.

If you would like to help in any of these areas, please email Pam Lauman at [pamggl@gmail.com](mailto:pamggl@gmail.com) and she will get back to you in early November. (Some people responded on the survey that they would be willing to volunteer but did not include contact information.)

Thanks for all you do to support GVAS!

## 2022 GVAS SURVEY RESULTS

By Pam Lauman

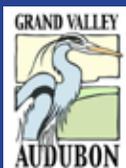
Thank you to the 74 people who completed our recent survey. We appreciate the feedback.

- 95% of the respondents are members of Grand Valley Audubon Society who joined to learn more about birds, meet others who appreciate birds, and to support the local chapter. Photography, education, and environmental concerns were also mentioned as important.
- 43% have been members for 6 or more years. Friends, community, and awareness of Audubon groups were the primary way that people learned about our local organization.
- People have been very involved with activities offered by GVAS. 88% read The Great Blue Herald, 65% participate in Bird Walks and Tumacanbac, 60% are involved with the Christmas Bird Count, and 53% with the Spring Bird Count. Preserve activities, building and installing owl nest boxes, and bluebird box monitoring were also popular activities.
- Almost 50% of our members give between \$25-100 yearly and 27% give from \$100-500 a year. Thank you!
- 82% preferred in-person meetings.

We had some great suggestions for future topics such as bird biology, how to use bird apps, casual discussions about birds seen recently, best times of day for birding, and flight patterns of birds and how they aid in recognition of the bird. We will try to address these topics. Please let us know if you have ideas for presenters also.

Some people indicated they would be interested in helping with GVAS Committees but did not include contact information. Please notify Pam Lauman at [pamggl@gmail.com](mailto:pamggl@gmail.com) if you would like to help with any of the groups listed below:

- Bird Watching Trips
- Programs Committee
- Hospitality Committee (CBCount Chili Supper, Membership Picnic)
- Planning/Governance (Board of Directors)
- Audubon Preserve/Wetlands Restoration Committee



Grand Valley Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 1211, Grand Junction,  
CO 81502



Photo by Chris Thomlinson

## BIRD WALKS – NEED VOLUNTEERS

Bird Walks are one of the favorite activities for GVAS members. In our recent survey, 65% of people responded that they have participated in one or more Bird Walks. Unfortunately, it seems like we are becoming busier than ever in our lives and it is difficult to find leaders. Some Audubon Chapters are doing group walks where one person organizes the time and place but everyone in the group participates in identifying birds.

Please let me know if you would be interested in organizing one of these groups. I will plan on leading one on **Monday, November 7**. Time and place will be available later online. Pam Lauman / [pamggl@gmail.com](mailto:pamggl@gmail.com) / 970-379-4872

## SAVE THE DATE for Christmas Bird Count

National Audubon sets the date parameters for Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) across the country to occur between December 14 to January 5 every year. Y our local Audubon Chapter GVAS has scheduled **this year's CBC in Grand Junction on Sunday, 12/18/22** and the **Mesa CBC on New Year's Day, January 1, 2023!**

If you would like to participate in either or both of the Christmas Bird Counts please check the Grand Valley Audubon Society (GVAS) website in November 2022 to learn about the various areas covered and contact the area leader if you are interested in participating.

Is your Membership Current?  
Check your account online at  
[www.AudubonGV.org](http://www.AudubonGV.org)  
click the Join GVAS Today.