



Bird Profiles:

# The Ubiquitous Canada Goose

Canada Geese are everywhere. They blanket golf courses, leave droppings on city park lawns, and foul ponds. They are a significant agricultural pest, especially of winter wheat. They're even implicated in plane crashes, such as US Airways Flight 1549's emergency "splash down" in the Hudson River last January.

You can find them on any body of water, even transient wetlands devoid of food. You hear honking and look up to see them flying east or west as well as north and south, arranged in their ragged v-formations. They seem so abundant that it's hard to imagine they were ever endangered, but at one time the "Giant" subspecies (*Branta canadensis maxima*) was thought to be extinct!

A hundred years ago, unrestricted egg harvesting, habitat destruction, and commercial hunting had totally decimated the Giant Canada goose population. By the 1950's, the subspecies was assumed to be gone.

In 1967, the US Fish and Wildlife Service listed another subspecies, the Aleutian-Canadian goose, as endangered. This time, the culprit was a non-native arctic fox that was introduced to their breeding grounds. Canada Geese molt while nesting, and are unable to fly at that time, making them easy prey. The foxes reduced the goose population to around 800 individuals.

Since that time, a number of measures have resulted in an almost unbelievable rebound in goose populations. The Migratory Bird Treaty, passed in 1918, established limits in both the number of geese taken, and the season in which they may be hunted. National Wildlife Refuges provide for habitat preservation and restoration. As numbers grew, the birds were reintroduced to their former range, increasing their distribution and reducing the risk of a cataclysmal event wiping out an entire subspecies.

PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy 2010! I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday season. My house was full of Cadets coming or going to and from airports, etc. Besides humans coming and going, I had many birds at my feeder—especially during the very cold spell we had in December. I'm always amazed how birds and other animals cope with temperature extremes. They are active in the bitter cold, scrounging for food and seemingly unaffected; if we could only be so lucky.

I hope you are able to overcome any future weather happenings and attend Aiken's upcoming

programs and field trips. Keep checking for any updates or changes on the website. Also, don't forget to see what Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers are offering. There are plenty of opportunities to keep you busy.

Keep on birding,

*Risö*

• RISÖ FOSTER-BRUDER  
PRESIDENT, AIKEN AUDUBON SOCIETY

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## COMING PROGRAMS

### January 20

"Raptor ID"  
presented by Steve Vaughan

### February 17

"Birds of Africa"  
presented by Frank Dodge

### March 17

"The Owl and the Woodpecker"  
presented by Paul Bannick

### April 21

"Mountain Plovers"  
presented by Victoria Dreitz

## Newsletter Articles

Items and announcements of special interest to Aiken Audubon members are welcomed for consideration. We'd love to hear from you!

Deadline for the March/April 2010 issue of Aikorns is Wednesday, February 17.

Contact the editor, Leslie Holzmänn,  
at: AikenAudubon@Gmail.com, or  
719.495.8889

## January 20 • Steve Vaughan Raptor Identification

Colorado has 23 species of diurnal raptors. Stephen Vaughan will be presenting an information-packed program explaining how to identify Colorado's eagles, hawks and falcons. Steve has been studying the identification of these birds for more than 30 years and has developed a simplified method for separating the various species. Here is your chance to learn the tips that will greatly improve your skills. Don't miss this outstanding program. [You can put your new skills into practice by signing up for the Hawks to Eagles field trip in February. —Ed.]

Steve holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Zoology from Colorado State University. He has been a professional nature photographer since 1985. Stephen has photography credits from such prestigious magazines as Audubon, Birders World and Sierra. His photographs have appeared in calendars published by Audubon Society, Sierra Club and Arizona Highways. He has been teaching nature photography at Pikes Peak Community College since 1998. In addition, he has led photography workshops to Cape May (New Jersey), Garden of the Gods, Rocky Mountain National Park, Southeast Arizona, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (New Mexico) and Costa Rica.



PHOTO © DEBRA BARNES

## February 17 • Frank Dodge Birds of Africa



When Frank and Dixie Dodge returned from a trip to Northern Tanzania in February, they were still in awe of all the amazing animals, birds, scenery and people they had experienced. After sifting through some 4000 digital images, Frank has put together a photo show of his favorite pictures to share with us at our February meeting. "The trip to Tanzania was the trip of a lifetime," Frank says. He adds, "I just hope others will be motivated to go there and see all these things for themselves."

Frank and Dixie own the Wild Bird Center, a specialty birding store located in the Woodmen Commons Shopping Center at Academy and Woodmen. Frank runs the store, which opened in 1998. Frank's fascination with birds relates back to when he and Dixie went camping some years ago and spotted an American Dipper in a stream next to the campground. Frank, who describes himself as a recovering attorney, has served as Vice-president of the Aiken Audubon Society for five years; and is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Palmer Land Trust. Dixie has been in private practice as a licensed psychologist in the Springs for the last 25 years.

**Aiken Audubon programs are free and open to the public. They are held at the Colorado State Division of Wildlife building located at 4255 Sinton Road. Coffee and socializing is at 6:30 pm and programs begin at 7 pm. Please use the back entrance. Note: Sinton Road runs parallel to I-25 on the east side, between Garden of the Gods Road and Fillmore Street.**

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## AIKEN AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

Everyone is welcome on Aiken field trips, regardless of experience level or membership in Audubon. Contact trip leader for details and to let them know you are coming. Don't forget to pack your binoculars, scope (if you have one), field guide, water, snack or lunch, hat, rain gear, sun screen, bug spray, camera(?), and some gas money for the drivers.

**Note:** In cases of extreme cold or snowy/icy conditions, trips may need to be cancelled. If you have any questions about the weather, please contact the trip leader an hour before the scheduled meeting time.

To receive e-mailed reminders of upcoming field trips, send your name and e-mail address to [AikenAudubon@gmail.com](mailto:AikenAudubon@gmail.com) with "field trip list" in the subject line.

Saturday, January 23, 9 am – noon

### Prospect Lake

Last winter our city's small lake in Memorial Park sported quite an assortment of wintering ducks, diving and dabbling. Join us for a gentle hike this year to see what species may have flown in along with geese and gulls. Park by the Veterans Memorial off of Union (near the playground on the southeast side of the lake). Bring your scope if you have one.

Trip Leaders: Rise Foster-Bruder 648-8361, Cyndy Kulp 332-2821

Saturday, February 6, 8:30 am – 3 pm

### Eagles! Lake Pueblo

Join us for the annual Audubon trip to Pueblo Reservoir in search of our national bird, the Bald Eagle. We will explore back roads in search of Golden Eagles, Ferruginous, Red Tailed and Rough-Legged Hawks, Merlin, Kestrel and Prairie Falcons on the way to Pueblo. At the Reservoir, we will take some time to enjoy activities at the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society's Eagle Days celebration. Please bring a sack lunch and a full tank of gas. We will be outside for short periods with a few short walks if the weather is bearable. A great trip for beginners!

Meet at Sears Southgate (Broadmoor Towne Center Nevada and Lake Avenue) near the Starbucks. Plan to return by mid afternoon.

Please call Gary Conover, 635-2505 for more information. Reservations not required.

Saturday, February 20, 8:30 am – 1 pm

### Fountain Creek Nature Center & Big Johnson Reservoir

Birding is always good at the Nature Center, and young birder, Saraiya Ruano, has explored this area thoroughly. She will lead us on a trip to discover what birds are around. Afterwards we will make a stop at Big Johnson to look for waterfowl.

Meet at Sears Southgate to carpool or caravan.

Contact Saraiya at 641-4305 if you need more info.



Happy New Year!

Saturday, March 6, 8 am – 1:30 pm

### Eagles! Remix

Gary Conover repeats his Eagles trip without the Eagle Days section. We will leave a little earlier (as it is lighter earlier), but still bring a lunch.

Meet at Sears Southgate (Broadmoor Towne Center Nevada and Lake Avenue) near the Starbucks.

Please call Gary Conover, 635-2505 for more information. Reservations not required.

For the latest information on field trips and events:  
[www.AikenAudubon.com](http://www.AikenAudubon.com)

## ARKANSAS VALLEY AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

The Arkansas Valley Audubon Society welcomes you on their field trips. Check their website for more information: [www.socobirds.org](http://www.socobirds.org). Be sure to contact trip leaders to let them know you would like to join them.

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Saturday, January 9, 8:30 – 11 am

### FCNC Winter Bird Count

Beginning-to-advanced birders are invited to observe and record the numbers of bird species and populations found in Fountain Creek Regional Park. The nature center is at 320 Pepper Grass Lane, Fountain, CO 80817.

Reservations requested: 719.520.6745. \$5 donation appreciated.

Friday, January 15, 7 – 8:30 pm

### Hawk Identification

Wonder what that large bird was soaring high above or perched on a utility pole? Maybe an eagle, a falcon, or a hawk, but how can you tell? Join professional photographer and birding expert Steve Vaughan to learn how to identify birds of prey through pictures and discussion, followed by a field trip on Saturday to see winter resident raptors.

Reservations requested, \$6.00/member, \$7.00/nonmember

Saturday, January 16, 8:30 am – noon

### Hawk Identification Field Trip

Wonder what that large bird was soaring high above or perched on a utility pole? Maybe an eagle or a hawk or a falcon, but how can you tell? Join a naturalist-birder on a field trip through El Paso County to see and identify winter resident raptors. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Reservations requested, \$4.00/member, \$5.00/nonmember

## Audubon/Sierra Club 2010 Legislative Forum

Date: Saturday, February 20, 2010  
 Time: 8:30 am – 1:30 pm  
 Place: First Plymouth Church  
 3501 S. Colorado Blvd., Denver

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver and the Enos Mills Group of the Sierra Club invite you to attend the 2010 Legislative Forum.

We especially encourage members of other Audubon chapters and other Sierra Club Groups to join us—this is always an entertaining and educational event!

Audubon Colorado Lobbyist Jen Boulton and Sierra Club Legislative Committee Chair Gary Lindstrom will go over this session's environmental bills, we'll hear from speakers on several of the key issues, and at lunch we'll talk with several Colorado legislators.

The cost is \$12 per person in advance, \$15 at the door. To register in advance, call the ASGD office at 303-973-9530.

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to use Audubon Wyoming study

Projected oil and natural gas development in the West could significantly reduce greater sage grouse populations, according to the study that recommends aggressive steps to shift drilling activity away from sensitive habitat areas. The three-year study concludes that robust oil and gas development in the Intermountain West could slash grouse populations in critical breeding grounds by as much as 19 percent.

Pat Deibert, the Fish and Wildlife Service's lead sage grouse biologist in Cheyenne, Wyoming, called the latest study another reminder that if energy development is not properly sited, it could result in the sage grouse becoming a federally protected species. "It's a good report, and the information in it will definitely be considered in any final decision we make on the bird's status," Deibert said.

More information is available at [www.eenews.net/public/Landletter/2009/10/22/1](http://www.eenews.net/public/Landletter/2009/10/22/1)

## Hog Island to Offer Summer Classes

The National Audubon Society will reopen its legendary Hog Island Camp for four adult ornithology sessions and one teen bird studies session this summer. Dr. Steve Kress, Audubon's VP for Bird Conservation, will direct the sessions. He will be joined by some of the country's top ornithologists who will serve as instructors, including Kenn Kaufman, Pete Dunne, and Scott Weidensaul. Additionally, there will be two totally new sessions offered in association with Elder Hostel (now Exploritas) where participants will assist Project Puffin biologists to census gulls, eiders and cormorants at nearby seabird nesting islands. Participants in the September session will learn about land and seabirds through bird banding and presentations, and assist with a habitat management project for endangered terns and storm-petrels at Eastern Egg Rock.

For more information on dates, visit [www.projectpuffin.org](http://www.projectpuffin.org)

February 12 – 15

## Great Backyard Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent and in Hawaii. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. There is also an annual photo contest.

Count information: [www.birdscount.org](http://www.birdscount.org)

Contest information: contact Meliss Hopkins at 202.861.2242, x3050 or [citizenscience@audubon.org](mailto:citizenscience@audubon.org).

## FESTIVALS & TRAVEL

February 23 – March 8

## Bird Costa Rica: a very special trip led by Bill Turner

With over 870 species of birds, Costa Rica is a birder's paradise. On this trip, you can expect to see 375 or more species in the company of expert bilingual Costa Rican birder guide, Max Vindas, who will accompany you throughout the tour. Experience the thrill of seeing scarlet macaws soaring to their night roosts in the mangroves and spotting a resplendent quetzal, arguably the most spectacular bird in the Americas, eating an aguacatillo fruit. Parrots, toucans, hummingbirds, kingfishers, tanagers, manakins, birds of prey, shorebirds—you'll see all of these and many more as you explore the stunning diversity of this remarkable country.

Itinerary details and more information: [www.aikenaudubon.com/Pages/Events/events2.html](http://www.aikenaudubon.com/Pages/Events/events2.html), or call Bill Turner at 303.795.5128

March 18 - 21, Kearney, Nebraska

## Rivers & Wildlife Celebration

Gather with wildlife enthusiasts from around the world to celebrate the annual migration of 500,000 sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl through central Nebraska. This 40th annual conference is open to anyone interested in experiencing one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on Earth and learning more about the natural world in a friendly and informal atmosphere.

More information: [www.nebraska.audubon.org/RWC.htm](http://www.nebraska.audubon.org/RWC.htm), Nebraska@audubon.org; 402.797.2301; Rowe Sanctuary has information about viewing the sandhill crane migration, 308/468-5282; [www.rowesanctuary.org](http://www.rowesanctuary.org).



## CANADA GEESE (CONT'D FROM FRONT PAGE)

As a result, the Aleutian-Canadian Goose population has increased to approximately 15,000 individuals distributed across eight islands. In 1990 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service changed their listing from endangered to threatened, and the state of Alaska now calls them a species of special concern.

The story of the Giant Canada Goose is even more amazing. Birders were thrilled when a small flock was discovered wintering in Rochester, Minnesota in 1962. Conservation efforts were so successful that there are now approximately 3.5 million of these birds in the United States!

While western goose populations may still be declining, the Canada Goose is currently called a "species of least concern." In fact, numbers are so great that the geese have become a nuisance in much of the country. The species may soon exceed the carrying capacity of its habitat, causing damage to the environment. Now the challenge is to balance conservation efforts with targeted control programs, so that we can live in harmony with this majestic species.

• LESLIE HOLZMANN

PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN



### Here's one way to use "excess" geese! Roasted Canadian [sic] Goose with Plum Sauce Windsor

1 large Canadian [sic] goose	<b>Plum Sauce Windsor</b>
Poultry seasoning to taste	4 Tbsp. butter
3 oranges, quartered	1/4 C light brown sugar
3 apples, quartered	1 Tbsp. cognac
3 medium red onions, quartered	1 10-ounce jar red plum jelly
1/4 C cognac	

Wash goose and pat dry. Sprinkle cavity liberally with poultry seasoning. Mix together oranges, apples and onions. Place inside cavity and pack firmly. Truss opening closed. Sprinkle outside of goose with poultry seasoning, salt and pepper. Place in large roasting pan. Roast at 500° for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 350° and continue roasting for 1 hour and 20 minutes. Baste several times with cognac and pan juices. Remove goose and carve breast against the grain in slices. Serve with Plum Sauce:

In small saucepan, melt butter. Add brown sugar, cognac and jelly. Mix well and heat until bubbly.

Recipe taken from *Crème de Colorado Cookbook*, by the Junior League of Denver, 1987. I highly recommend this book!

*aikorns*

## Aiken Audubon Society Membership/Subscription

### Sign Up For:

One Year \$10.00

Two Years \$18.00

Donation

New Total \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Mail Check To:

Aiken Audubon Society  
6660 Delmonico Dr. D-195,  
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

## Goose Taxonomy

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) taxonomy is exceptionally confusing.

Some authorities divide them into four subspecies according to range: Southern, Northern, Western, and Aleutian-Canadian.

Other ornithologists separate them into as many as eleven subspecies based primarily on physical characteristics.

Sibley describes five subspecies: Common, Dusky, Lesser, Richardson's, and Aleutian.

Both the Oregon and Washington Departments of Fish and Wildlife list six subspecies: Western, Vancouver, Dusky, Lesser, Taverner's, and Aleutian.

The National Geographic Field Guide also lists six, and gives the Latin names, but the divisions are somewhat different: Atlantic (*B. c. canadensis*), Dusky (*B. c. occidentalis*), Lesser (*B. c. parvipes*), Taverner's (*B. c. taverneri*), Richardson's (*B. c. hutchinsii*), and Aleutian (*B. c. leucopareia*).

Wikipedia gives seven: Giant, Atlantic, Dusky, Vancouver, Lesser, Moffitt's (*B. c. moffitti*), and Interior (*B. c. interior*).

One goose expert, Harold Hansen, even suggests splitting Canada Goose into six species and 200 subspecies! That seems extreme, but at least most taxonomists now agree that the Cackling Goose, once considered the smallest subspecies, is actually a separate species.



**Aiken Audubon Society**  
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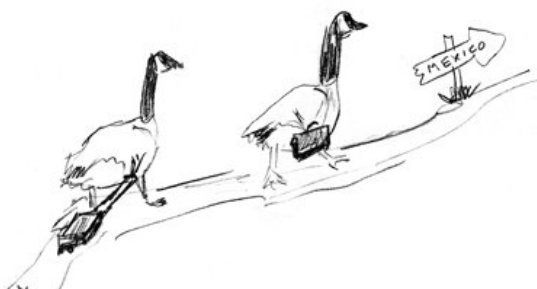
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# Birding Trails

When I first encountered the term “Birding Trail,” a mental image flashed into my mind of a migrating flock trudging down the road, heading south with their suitcases tightly grasped in their wings. Turns out that wasn’t quite right.

Birding trails are actually comprised of a series of birding hotspots (places where birds are known to congregate) connected by a driving route. You pick up the map, hop in the car, and set off on your birding adventure.

Texas started the whole idea several years ago with the establishment of the Texas Coastal Birding Trail. A special map marks out the route, and signs along the highway indicate where to pull over, take a break, and look for birds. The concept is so popular that half the states have followed suit, and birding trails abound.



For the out-of-towner, birding trails are a tremendous resource. While bird guides have been published for most states, these quickly become out of date as roads and landmarks change over time. The internet is a great resource for traveling birders, but it takes hours to search for and read all the pertinent sites. A birding trail makes planning your trip much easier as it combines all that information into one source.

To get you started, National Audubon has compiled a list of birding trails around the country ([www.audubon.org/bird\\_trails](http://www.audubon.org/bird_trails)). It’s incomplete, however. My husband and I just returned from a trip to the Oregon coast for a somewhat delayed thirtieth anniversary celebration. The Oregon birding trails (there are more than one) weren’t on the Audubon list, but were easy to find just by Googling “Oregon birding trail.”

In addition to the benefit birders derive from following a designated birding trail, local business also prosper. All those people hunting birds also need food, gas, and in many cases, a place to spend the night. Those providing these services start catering to birders, and everyone wins. Even the birds win. Good bird habitat is more easily protected when the locals realize it’s a money-making resource.

Now that we know where to look, we should be able to find all those rarities, right?

• LESLIE HOLZMANN