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aikorns
AIKEN AUDUBON SOCIETY

WICHITY WICHITY WICHITY

by Leslie Holzmann

I ADMIT IT—I'M TERRIBLE AT IDENTIFYING BIRD SOUNDS. They can screech and chirp and warble and coo all they want, and I have no idea who's making the racket. Well, that's not quite true. I do recognize really easy birds such as a Spotted Towhee, Canyon Wren, Swainson's Thrush, Townsend's Solitaire, or Cactus Wren (right). I can identify a chickadee's "chick-a-dee-dee-dee," too, but I can't tell a Black-capped from a Mountain without looking.



It's all right to rely on my (rather poor) eyesight during the winter, when there are no leaves on the trees, but I miss too many birds the rest of the year—and if I do see them, I can't identify them. It's not from lack of trying. I can listen to a recording and try to fix it in my mind, but a minute later I have no recollection of what I just heard. I need help.

Happily, there are all sorts of useful ways to remember bird songs. To begin with, the chickadee isn't the only bird that will tell you its name. How about a Killdeer, Phoebe, Towhee, Whip-poor-will, or Cuckoo?

There are other ways that birds are named after their sounds. Catbirds meow, Warbling Vireos warble, and Whistling Ducks whistle.

For those birds that are named after a different characteristic, some creative birders have come up other helpful hints. Robins wake us up with a cheerful "cheery-up, cheery-o, cheery-up, cheerily" Yellow warblers tell us, "Sweet, sweet, sweet, I'm so sweet" and Common Yellowthroats sing "wich-i-ty, wich-i-ty, wich-i-ty." My (non-birder) husband claims this Western Meadowlark is asking, "What's that complicated sound?"



Learning bird sounds is an essential skill; sometimes, it's the only way to distinguish one species from another. Consider the Empidonax flycatchers. They sure look the same, especially when they're

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

I'm not a "chaser," but the reports of Common Redpolls—and possible Hoary Redpolls!—in Fort Collins called me. So, on Martin Luther King Day I drove almost 300 miles and didn't see a single RedPoll. That is the fun of birding. Some days you'll see your target bird; some days you don't.

You need to get out and bird to see birds, but with my busy work schedule I don't always have the opportunity as often as I would like.

One way to motivate myself is to bird with others, making it an appointment on my calendar. Another is to take advantage of the great field trips that Aiken Audubon hosts. We have

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Coming programs

MARCH 13 (2ND WEDNESDAY!)

Rocky Mountain Hummingbirds

Presented by Tena and Fred Engleman

APRIL 17

Beyond Birds: The Rewards of Bugwatching

Presented by Eric Eaton

MAY 15

Live Raptors!

Presented by Nature's Educators

Newsletter articles

Articles, announcements, or other items of special interest to Aiken Audubon members are welcomed for consideration. We'd love to hear from you!

Deadline for the May/Summer 2013 issue of *Aikorns* is Wednesday, April 17.

➤ Contact the editor, Leslie Holzmann, at aikenaudubon@gmail.com, or call (719) 964-3197.

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MARCH 13 / TENA & FRED ENGLEMAN HUMMINGBIRDS OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

WITH SPRING OFFICIALLY SET TO BEGIN IN A WEEK AND HUMMINGBIRDS BEGINNING THEIR northward migration to Colorado, it's time to look forward to bright spring flowers and early arriving hummingbirds next month.

This evening's program will describe information derived from a decade of volunteer field research on Rocky's hummingbird populations. Topics to be addressed include survivorship and longevity, relative reproductive success, weather effects, genetic studies, and migration corridors. During the course of the survey, Tena and Fred Engelman captured, banded, measured, and released nearly 12,000 hummingbirds of four species as a part of the only avian survey of this scope yet to be conducted in the park. If time permits, they will include a brief presentation on some of Central America's hummingbirds.



PHOTO: ENGLEMAN

Broad-tailed Hummingbird

APRIL 17 / ERIC EATON BEYOND BIRDS: THE REWARDS OF BUG WATCHING

PHOTO: ERIC EATON



Greater Angle-wing Katydid

INSECTS ARE WILDLIFE, TOO! WE MAY CONSIDER MOST insects to be garden-eating, garbage-infesting, blood-sucking pests, but the truth is the overwhelming majority are vital to our lives, and the cornerstones of healthy habitats.

While we have traditionally neglected to look at insects the way we watch birds, that culture is changing. Butterflies, dragonflies, and even tiger beetles are rising in popularity among naturalists.

Sure, there are barriers to "bugwatching," like needing different equipment, and changing one's search image, but the rewards are well worth the effort and minor inconvenience. Insects are beautiful, diverse, and the chances of making new discoveries about them is vastly greater than it is with any other organism.

Eric R. Eaton is principal author of the *Kaufman Field Guide to Insects of North America*. He has also been published in *Birds & Blooms*, *Ranger Rick*, *Missouri Conservationist*, *Orion*, and other popular journals. Please join us for a rare look at some of Colorado's most watchable "bugs," and an entertaining explanation of how to observe them.

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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CHRISTMAS COUNT

Ken Pals
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Answers to Mnemonics Quiz: 1-Eastern Towhee, 2-Barred Owl, 3-Olive-sided Flycatcher, 4-Black-throated Blue Warbler, 5-White-throated Sparrow, 6-American Goldfinch, 7-Warbbling Vireo, 8-Carolina Wren, 9-Chestnut Warbler, 10-Great-horned Owl, 11-Red-eyed Vireo, 12-Tufted Titmouse, 13-Ovenbird, 14-Brown Thrasher, 15-Chestnut-sided Warbler.

Aiken Audubon Field Trips & Events

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. No dogs are allowed on Aiken trips.

Note: In cases of extreme weather, trips may be cancelled. If this might be a possibility, 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.

WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN GUANELLA PASS PHOTO TRIP

**SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 6AM - 5PM (NOTE THAT
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS THIS DAY)**

PHOTO: DEBBIE BARNES



Photographers and birders will want to join us for this search for White-tailed Ptarmigan in their winter plumage.

We'll drive to Guanella Pass, parking two miles from the top. Then we'll snowshoe up the road watching for birds. What a thrill

when they burst from the snow at your feet! The hike will last two to three hours depending on how many times you stop and rest. I will be one of the resters! Once at the top, those with enough energy can continue to snowshoe the area looking for Ptarmigan tracks.

Be prepared to snowshoe in weather from windy to snowy to sunny. Bring layers for high altitude, food and water for the day, warm socks, heating packets for hands, hiking boots, backpack, cameras, and snowshoes. You can rent snowshoes from REI here in town, or in Idaho Springs at Maison De Ski, 2804 Colorado Blvd.; they open at 7 am. Rental for day is \$13 – \$15. They also can rent you bib pants and jackets if needed.

This trip will go in bad weather as long as the roads are safe to drive and open. Those with high clearance vehicles are encouraged to drive. Passengers will help with gas costs.

Meet in Colorado Springs at the Woodmen Park N Ride at 6 am or at Beau Jo's Pizza in Idaho Springs at 8 am. The drive is 1 hour and 40 minutes from Idaho Springs. Afterwards we can meet and eat at Beau Jo's Pizza if you want to.

For more information and to RSVP, contact Debbie Barnes at kfoopooh@yahoo.com or (c) (303) 947-0566.

O IS FOR OWL

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 9 - 10:15 AM

Share in the joy of your 2- or 3-year-old child's discovery as he or she enjoys a story and an exploration hike outdoors. This event is hosted by Fountain Creek Nature Center and is listed here for your convenience. Cost: \$3.00 for each participant including adults and siblings.

Reservations required: (719) 520-6745.

More trips online!

For the latest information on field trips and events:

www.AikenAudubon.com

SPRING BREAK NATURE CAME: JUNIOR NATURALISTS (GRADES 1-6)

MARCH 25 - 29, 9AM - 3PM

Playtime in the woods, building forts, fishing, games, and making friends are portals to exploration of nature and ourselves. Through the topics of Adaptations, Hawk Watch-Owl Prowl, Habitats, Bugs and Nature Detectives campers will discover the world around them and how to be stewards of the environment. The week concludes with a jeopardy competition between parents and nature campers and Junior Naturalist badges will be awarded at the closing ceremony. Bring your own lunch and re-usable water bottle.

This event is hosted by Fountain Creek Nature Center and is listed here for your convenience. Prepaid registration required. Call (719) 520-6745 with VISA, MC, or Discover. (\$120/ nature center member; \$130/non-member). Limit 24 children. Scholarships available.

E-mail nancybernard@elpasoco.com for more information.

CHICO BASIN RANCH

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, TIME TBA

John Drummond will lead this trip. Details to be announced soon—check the website for updates.

RSVP to Jeannie Mitchell, vancerus@earthlink.net, (h) 719.494.1977, (c) 719.233.1956; limit 16 participants.

THE 2013 ANNUAL CFO CONVENTION WILL BE HELD MAY 16-19 IN CORTEZ, CO



**VISIT CFOBIRDS.ORG/CONVENTION FOR
MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER.**

President's Message, continued from front page

amazing volunteer leaders, and you can read about these trips here in this newsletter or on our website. I hope to see you on an upcoming trip. Together we will find the rarities while enjoying the regulars.

Christine A. Bucher,
Aiken Audubon President

DROUGHT SOLUTION?

THERE IS A GAP BETWEEN PROJECTED WATER SUPPLY AND DEMAND on the Colorado River. The Bureau of Reclamation presented an idea that was studied by politicians in the 1960s. The idea then was to divert 600,000 acre feet of Missouri River water. The water was going to come via pipeline from the far eastern side of Kansas to Denver reservoirs.

After 50 years, and after looking at options for getting water for the ever growing Denver population, this idea has resurfaced. The water would have to be pumped uphill for 600 miles to Denver. Climate change has pushed resource allocation and cost into uncharted territories. Stay tuned for other ideas that will be suggested for the West.

LOCAL WATER RATIONING PROPOSED

COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES IS ALREADY PLANNING WAYS TO REDUCE 2013 water consumption by 30%. In a recent email, they stated:

Our drought response plan is comprehensive and customer focused.

1. Looking at additional supply options
2. Re-establishing mandatory water restrictions that allow customers to water outdoors twice per week
3. Adapting our current tiered pricing so that those who choose to use more water will pay more
4. Enhancing customer education and outreach

Customers who adhere to restrictions and best water use practices (tiers 1 and 2) will see little to no impact on their water bill. According to our proposal, customers who use the most water would be charged double for any use that falls into tier 3.

We expect that because of restrictions our annual budget will experience about an \$18 million revenue shortfall this year. That loss will be absorbed internally through further reductions in our already highly-efficient budget.

We will request a decision from City Council in March, and if approved, restrictions would go into effect April 1.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

This year Audubon is moving to digital delivery of the Christmas Bird Count results, rather than printing and mailing the CBC summary report to participants. To receive information regarding the digital edition of American Birds this year, please sign up online at: www.audubon.org/citizenscience by entering your email address. Even if your email address is currently in the CBC system, you will receive American Birds only if you sign up through the new citizen science network.

Joining Audubon's online citizen science network this way also ensures you will receive updates on the latest research results, reports from Audubon scientists, and notification when count summaries are posted online. In addition, you will learn about other citizen science programs and opportunities that may interest you. Please take a moment to sign up now and also to share this information with others who may find it of interest.

Quiz choices include: Barred Owl, Great-horned Owl, Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Tufted Titmouse, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Eastern Tanager Towhee, White-throated Sparrow, Ovenbird, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Chestnut Warbler, American Goldfinch

NEWS & NOTES:

COLORADO WATERSHED ASSEMBLY

The Colorado Watershed Assembly is a statewide coalition of over 80 local organizations working to protect the health of their area's unique watersheds. These citizen groups work to protect rivers and streams and the wildlife that relies on healthy habitat. Each local group addresses issues specific to their watershed, including water quality, environmental degradation, agricultural diversions, water conservation and recreation. Member organizations address their priority issues through advocacy, community outreach and through restoration and enhancement projects. Go to: www.coloradowater.org for more information.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS IN COLORADO

Private lands are essential to western wildlife. In the 1990's, landowners began placing conservation easements on their private lands. In early December 2012, Louis Bacon put 166,000 acres of his land into a conservation easement in Colorado's San Luis Valley. This land is now part of the Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area and is one the world's longest protected wildlife migration corridors. The easement also protects the land from a proposed power transmission line from crossing the land.

Find out more information from *High Country News* at www.hcn.org. 12/16/11, "Stitching habitat together across public and private lands."

WILDERNESS AREA AT RISK

Conservationists have filed a suit with the Department of the Interior to halt Arch Coal's plans to bulldoze, road and drill the forests next to Colorado's West Elk Wilderness Area. The company plans to expand dirty energy development on public lands. This area is part of the Sunset Roadless Area in Gunnison County. In December 2012, The Bureau of Land Management decided to allow Arch Coal to expand its West Elk mine in Gunnison County. The approval allows Arch Coal to bulldoze 6.5 miles of new roads and drill 48 natural gas drilling pads in the roadless forest.

For more detailed information, to go www.earthjustice.org/news. Then search for January 29, 2013 article.

sitting on a branch many yards away. Happily, they don't sound the same.

The Willow Flycatcher goes "fitz-bew," the Acadian orders pepperoni "peet-sah," the Alder Flycatcher says "fee-bee-oh," and the Cordilleran Flycatcher twits "pit-peet." If you hear "chipit-brrk-grrip" it's Hammonds, and "chiirip-greep-pweet" is a Dusky. (Of course, we can also use other clues, such as habitat and range.) These mnemonics are convenient—until fall migration, when they're out of habitat and range, and not singing.

The problem comes when we try to write down a series of chirps, whistles, and warbles as words. It just isn't very accurate. One person's "pit-peet" is another's "ps-SEET, ptsick, seet!" Plus, birds don't always sing their entire song, making it even harder.

If you aren't familiar with the actual sound, these mnemonics can be pretty useless. Living in the west, I'd never heard a Whip-poor-will. Thinking in terms of how I would say the phrase in English, I assumed the accent was on the "whip." When I finally heard a recording (I still haven't heard the bird in person), I was astonished to learn that it's actually "whip-poor-WILL!" instead. It seems that these memory-joggers are more helpful when you know the possible sounds but you need to tell one bird from another, as with the flycatchers.

I'm hopeful that with more experience, I'll finally learn most of the common birds. I guess I just have to do a lot of birding, hopefully with someone who has a good ear!

DO YOU KNOW YOUR MNEMONICS?

Try to identify the birds that make the following sounds (warning, these birds are not all common, and not all are found in Colorado):

1. Drink your tea
2. Who Cooks for You! Who cooks for you all?
3. Quick, free beer!
4. I'm so la-zee.
5. Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody.
6. Potato chip (and then they dip)
7. If I sees you, I will seize you, and I'll squeeze you till you squirt.
8. Tea kettle, tea kettle, tea kettle.
9. Pleased, pleased, pleased, pleased-ta MEETCHA.
10. Who's awake? Me too.
11. Here I am. Where are you? Over here. Look up now. Do you see?
12. Peter-peter-peter. Peter-peter-peter.
13. Teacher teacher teacher teacher (with each "teacher" progressively louder)
14. Spring's here, spring's here, plant it plant it, in the ground, in the ground, cover it up, cover it up...
15. Very very very pleased-to-meet-you (quite fast)

Need help? See page 4 for a list of birds to choose from. See page 2 for the answers.

LITTLE KNOWN & SELDOM SEEN

by Leslie Holzmann

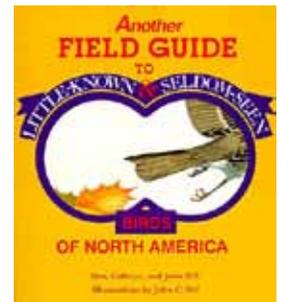
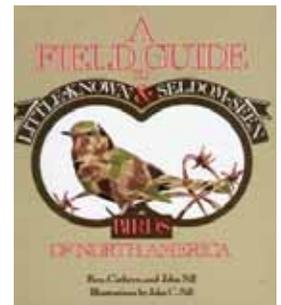
D O YOU REALLY NEED ANOTHER FIELD guide to North American birds? Yes, you do. In fact, you need two of them—the sooner, the better. How many of your current field guides have entries for the Yellow-bellied Prairie Chicken, the Blunt-billed Woodpecker, or the Split Rail? None of them, I bet.

Do your current field guides explain how to correctly assemble the parts of a bird? I'm sure they don't. Do you own a book explaining what to say to other birders while on a field trip? No? Well then...

A Field Guide to Little-Known & Seldom-Seen Birds of North America and its sequel, *Another Field Guide to Little-Known & Seldom-Seen Birds of North America* (both by Ben, Cathryn, and John Sill, illustrations by John C. Sill) give you this essential information.

Let me provide an example: the Texas Warbler. To quote a bit of the description,

The largest member of the genus *Dendroica*, this species is difficult to identify since it is the most rapid flyer. It is also the most beautiful, has the loudest song, is the most ferocious, and molts most rapidly.



Sadly, the first volume is out of print, but gently used copies are still available online.

My favorite bird of the bunch was the Nearsighted Bat Owl. These are quite rare because, as the book explains, "Incubation successes are generally low since every time the owl leaves the nest, the eggs fall out."

I have found these two books to be invaluable additions to my birding bookshelf, and well worth their modest purchase prices. The only thing lacking is a third guide. Maybe if we all ask nicely?



Look for the Aiken Audubon Society Facebook page!

facebook.com/pages/Aiken-Audubon-Society



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You do not have to be a member to participate in Aiken's activities.

WANTED: TREASURER

DO YOU LIKE MONEY?

The Aiken Audubon Society's current treasurer, Arlene Sampson, will be moving back to Iowa this year, most likely this summer. Interested in taking her place?

Can you balance a checkbook? Are you familiar with online banking? Can you get to a Wells Fargo Bank now and then? Are you able to use Excel or Quicken? We use one or the other to track expenses and revenues. Do you or can you attend the general meetings every month except June, July, August, and December? Can you attend board meetings in January, March, May, September, November? They generally last an hour to an hour and a half, and are lots of fun. Do you have email? Sometimes we make decisions or have discussions by email.

Being Treasurer only takes an hour most months, and approximately two hours other months. Here's what you'd be doing:

- Compile reports for the board meetings
- File the annual report with the Secretary of State on line (they send you an email reminder)
- File the 990-N with the IRS (there are copies to follow; no tax experience necessary!)
- Writes checks to pay speakers, reimburse for supply purchases, and pay property taxes for our property in Park County
- Make purchases for supplies
- Monitor Aiken's checking, savings, and CD accounts
- Keep files of the statements.

- Once a year we file an annual report with National Audubon that includes income and outgo and volunteer hours; the Treasurer compiles the financials for the report.

As intimidating as it sounds, it is not any more difficult than taking care of your personal finances, and most definitely less time consuming.

Give it a thought. The board works as a team—we won't let you go through any of it alone. Come be part of the Aiken Team!

Contact any board member for more information or to let us know you're interested in volunteering.

Flores' Funnies

Artist Rick Flores, a Nature Center volunteer, enjoys sharing his views of happenings at Fountain Creek and Bear Creek Nature Centers.

