

GRAND VALLEY



AUDUBON

Great Blue Herald

Grand Valley Audubon Society

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

P.O. Box 1211, Grand Junction, CO 81502

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT – 124th YEAR

By Janet Gallenstein

Christmas Bird Count – Grand Junction

Frank Chapman and 26 other conservationists initiated the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) as a way of promoting conservation by counting, rather than hunting, birds on Christmas Day of 1900. Some counts have been running every year since then and the CBC now happens in over 20 countries in the western hemisphere! Now a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 120 years of community science involvement, it is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the U.S., Canada (where Audubon partners with Birds Canada), and many countries in the Western Hemisphere go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to count birds.

All Christmas Bird Counts are conducted between December 14 to January 5, inclusive dates, every year. Participation is free and participants provide their own transportation, binoculars and weather appropriate clothing. In both of our local counts (Grand Junction, Mesa) there is a leader for each count area and participants sign up with that leader. Birders of all skill sets are involved in the CBC. If you are a beginning birder, your leader will pair you with experienced other birders.

Our two local bird counts in the Grand Valley are as follows:

Grand Junction	Sunday	12/17/23
Mesa	Monday	01/01/24 (New Year's Day)

SEE LEADER CHART ON NEXT PAGE >

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.

In conjunction with the Grand Junction CBC, Nic Korte/ Conservation Chair for our local Audubon Chapter organizes a special count for Western Screech Owls.

More information for both of these counts can be found at the www.AudubonGV.org as well as our Face Book page.

Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally – all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day.

If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangement with the leader.

CBC data have been used in hundreds of analyses, peer-reviewed publications, and government reports over the decades. And, it is a lot of fun!

Should you or someone you know be interested in participating in our Christmas Bird Count(s), please contact Janet Gallenstein at jagbell2@gmail.com or call/text 413-250-4101.

Christmas Bird Count – Mesa

The Christmas Bird Count for the Mesa area is Monday, January 1st, 2024 in the town of Mesa. To participate meet at 9 a.m. at the Wagon Wheel Restaurant in the town of Mesa. As usual, Mesa CBC area leaders have recruited their own small teams and may be able to include more participants this year. Thank you so much for your interest and enthusiasm for leading and participating in this year's 2023 Mesa Christmas Bird Count!

SEE LEADER CHARTS ON NEXT PAGE >

www.AudubonGV.org

**Area Leaders Grand Junction Christmas Bird Count
Sunday, December 17, 2023**

SURVEY AREA OR ASSIGNMENT	LEADER	O	PHONE	EMAIL
Owling – multiple areas	Nic Korte		970-242-3779	nkorte1@hotmail.com
1a Upr Colorado River	Cindy Appel/raft (Cary Atwood)		970-261-8740	cindyappel19@gmail.com
1b Lwr Colorado River	Brett Meredith Walker/raft		406-546-4709	mwalker@birdpop.org
2. Adobe Creek	Steve Cunningham		970-201-8886	smcunning@charter.net
3. Appleton	OPEN	O	OPEN	OPEN
4. Connected Lakes	Cecilia Barr/Lee Stigen		970-241-3905	cbarr1951@gmail.com
5. D Road	Mike Henwood		720-840-5070	mhawkhen@gmail.com
6. Fruita Northeast	Bill and Julie Schneider (Lori Schuler, Christine Alexander)		B 713-303-9221 J 713-412-4741	Ws7netmail@icloud.com Jmschneider7@gmail.com
7. Fruita Southeast	Deb Turbridy CoLeader Pam Lauman CoLeader		954-790-5187 970-379-4872	dmtubridy@gmail.com plauman@me.com
8. GJ North	Carrie McVean CoLeader Stephanie Matlock CoLeader		970-261-0059	cmcvean@coloradomesa.edu
9. Gunnison River	Kathleen McGinley (Eileen Ross, Brenda Sabo)		970-712-0980	mcginley@acsol.net
10. Monument East	OPEN	O	OPEN	OPEN
11. Monument West	Doug Diekman		970-858-2373	dadiekmn@msn.com
12. Orchard Mesa	Larry Marjorie McKenna		720-301-2226	larrymckenna48@gmail.com
13. Redlands East	Dave & Diane Trappett Jackson Trappett		970-270-3810	potoo@msn.com dentrada@msn.com
14. Redlands West	Logan Wagner / Janet Gallenstein (Desert Hills subdivision, Riggs Hill)		918-695-4989 Rev.	loganwagnerdesign@gmail.com

Mesa CBC Leaders 2023 New Years Day (1/1/24)

<u>Mike Henwood</u> <u>Kathleen McGinley</u>	Molina Sections north, south	
<u>Ronda Woodward</u>	<u>Collbran</u> Section north, south	
<u>Mark Denise Vollmar</u> <u>Eileen Cunningham</u>	Mesa Section east	Includes Mesa cemetery vicinity.
OPEN	Mesa Section west	
<u>Doug Diekman</u> <u>Shannon Young</u>	<u>Wildwood/Powderhorn</u> to top of Grand Mesa and Countyline	
OPEN NA	<u>Grand Mesa Section: Old Grand Mesa Highway from Powderhorn to Hwy 65. Old GM Hwy above Mesa Lakes Lodge.</u>	Conditions may dictate route. Logistics difficult. Drop 2 cars. Snow shoe/ski between 2 locations. Not highly productive.
<u>Cecilia Barr</u> <u>Lee Stigen</u>	Skyway Section: <u>xc skis</u>	Not always covered. Dependent on weather, conditions, and people availability.
<u>Nic Korte</u> 7-11am	Jerry Creek Section, V Road	Not always covered. Dependent on weather, conditions, and people availability.
<u>Logan Wagner</u>	Between Bull Basin Rd, 561/4 rd, 59 Rd. Lower elevation with aspens/water.	New area 2022. Snow shoes. Not always covered. Dependent on weather, conditions, and people availability.

CONSERVATION NEWS! By Nic Korte

BIRDS: PINK, HORNED, AND ORANGE – As I write, I have been back from Guatemala less than a day. I was fortunate enough to see *Pink-headed Warblers*, a *Horned Guan*, and two *Orange-breasted Falcons*. Look them up on ebird! They are unique, stunning, beautiful and in trouble. All three species are threatened by deforestation and the warblers and guan have restricted geographic distributions. Pink-headed Warblers have recently been listed in peril of extinction in Mexico where there are likely more than in Guatemala. The total Horned Guan population was estimated in the 1970s to be less than 1000. There are probably a few more considering this species' ability to live in nearly inaccessible mountain and canyon habitats. Only forty pairs of Orange-breasted Falcons survive in Central America. Although wide-ranging, several nations have listed the Orange-breasted Falcon in the highest endangered category causing the Peregrine Fund to begin a captive breeding program. I loved seeing these species, while feeling sad that there may not be a similar opportunity for my grandchildren. I saw the guan in a national park where later we heard and saw extensive illegal cutting. Law enforcement is almost non-existent. What can you do? Go see them with local guides to increase local support. Donate to groups who work to protect these species such as the American Bird Conservancy. Drink shade-grown coffee to limit deforestation. Any small amount of assistance will help. Have hope!

THE SOUND OF FLIGHT – Albatrosses may fly more than 10,000 km in a single trip. Although built for flight, the birds are heavy with a wingspan that may exceed three meters. How do they do it? Researchers have new data indicating albatrosses can hear very low frequencies, below what is audible to humans. These sounds are generated by distant crashing waves that create the updrafts the birds need for effortless flight. Of the 22 species of albatrosses, 21 are listed as having some level of population concern, including two that are critically endangered. To help albatrosses, be careful what seafood you eat. The website seafood.edf.org can help with your selection. If your vendor does not know the origin, do not buy, and tell him why.

STRIKE FORCE – Sadly, we are not seeing barn owls very much in the valley. (If you see one, please report it as we may be able to focus some protection efforts.) Interestingly, researchers have recently reported that “even these ultra stealthy owls create turbulence and sound in flight.” They also have the highest strike force relative to body mass of any bird measured so far. For that reason, barn owls prefer solid perches because they can land quietly. The research shows that birds hunting from fence posts have greater success such that in some cases, human land use has benefited them.



Only forty pairs of Orange-breasted Falcons survive in Central America (top). Pink-headed Warbler (L) A Horned Guan (R). All three are threatened by deforestation. Ebird images.



Tristan Albatross. Of the 22 species of albatrosses, 21 are listed as having some level of population concern, including two that are critically endangered: Tristan Albatross and Waved Albatross. Ebird image.

REMEMBERING DAVE PRICE

David J Price

Look! Up in the sky! It's a plane. No, it's a bird. What kind of bird? Ask Dave Price, superman of birding in the Fruita and Grand Junction, Colorado area until laid low by a fatal stroke at age 73 on November 7, 2023.



Not only was Dave able to answer any question you could have about birds, but he also had a wicked sense of humor, loved cats and clogging, was a devotee of Monty Python and a dedicated public servant. His lengthy career with the National Park Service included assignments both with interpretation (education, natural and cultural history) and natural resources management.

We expect Dave has already swapped his heavenly harp for quality binoculars and is planning trips to the outer reaches of the universe in search of passenger pigeons and greater auks. *(excerpt from The Daily Sentinel Obit 11/19/23)*

Charitable contributions can be made to the "Re-a-Ranger Fund" at Western Colorado Community Foundation. There will be a celebration of life at Ponca State Park, Nebraska,

May 31 to June 1, 2024, hosted by Dave's sister Penny Fee. She has reserved cabins and will cover the cost. There will be a catered meal plus a day of birding in Ponca State Park which is an eBird hotspot and birding at nearby areas.

GVAS Tribute to Dave Price

Dec. 18, 2023, from 5:30-6, 6-7:30 pm Chili & Auction
Location: First Presbyterian Church, 3940 27 1/2 Rd,
Grand Junction, CO 81506

What: Tribute, Chili Supper, CBC Reports & Auction.

Reservations are a must! [CBC Volunteers are Free but must register.](#) [All others are \\$15 / register here.](#)



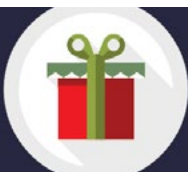
More CONSERVATION NEWS! By Nic Korte

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS – Buy your loved ones organic/shade grown coffee. Several GVAS members remain addicted to coffee from Café Cristina in Costa Rica. You can order at cafecristina.com. This small, private coffee farm grows gourmet beans and has a bird list of over 300. *(Typical sun coffee plantations might support <10 species.)* Another purveyor online is consciouscoffees.com from Boulder. You can also find it through the Smithsonian's Bird Friendly Coffee initiative.

Another obvious gift suggestion is a donation or membership for GVAS or like-minded group. We strive to be a strong member of the local conservation community and our voice grows if our membership does. Many people enjoy National Audubon's award-winning magazine as well.

There are other great local groups: Conservation Colorado (<https://conservationco.org/>) and Western Colorado Alliance for Community Action (<https://westerncoloradoalliance.org/>) are groups with a strong Mesa County and Western Slope presence. They need our support because it is their staff that keep us informed of local environmental issues and represent all of us at public hearings. National and international groups such as the American Bird Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy are also good choices.

Finally, check out Mesa County **local merchants** and their supplies of bird seed and feeders. Birds Unlimited is a great resource. But, when you do, ask questions, which birds will use which seed is a good one because not all seed is created equal when it comes to attracting birds. And maybe a summer touch is what we need in the middle of winter. Most everyone can use another hummingbird feeder and thoughts of spring.



Give the
Gift

of GV Audubon!
 Join or Renew Now!
 Support your local bird chapter!!

www.AudubonGV.org

AUDUBON NATURE PRESERVE –

Update of the Wetlands Preserve Project *By Meredith Walker*

Progress is still being made on our Wetlands Project albeit “behind the scenes.”

We are now in Phase 2 of the project which will consist of recontouring the north end of Traylor Pond so it is a shallow wetland like Osprey Pond and installing irrigation pipe and infrastructure so that we can move water to the various wetlands on the property. The construction plans for Phase 2 have been finalized, put out for bid and we expect to have a contract with a construction company soon.

Once we have a contract we will have an estimate of when construction will take place to share with you. As in Phase 1, we are sourcing fill dirt from the area north of Osprey Pond and in the parking area so there will be quite a bit of upheaval. Please be patient with the mess, it will be worth it in the end!

In the meantime please keep eBirding at the Preserve and if you see any shorebirds, waders, or waterfowl note in the comments which pond or wetland you saw them on.



Bird Banding Recap 2023 *By Cary Atwood*

In a nutshell: it was a slow season for bird banding. Not only at Connected Lakes, but across all of the banding stations that Bird Conservancy of the Rockies monitors. Was it the high autumn temperatures and lack of weather systems? Was it the continuing loss of habitat and resulting decline in bird numbers? We truly may never know. Although we were short on birds, with only 117 captured birds, representing 18 species, we had more students than ever before attending this popular field trip for fourth graders: over 850! With 15 schools attending, some for the very first time, our banding educators Nancy Slipka and Carol Serrano-Treider were kept extremely busy competently teaching the big ideas of migration and bird banding science with students.

This outdoor education field trip would not happen without the many volunteers and over 275 of dedicated volunteer hours. Volunteers arrive at the banding station in the cool daylight of mid-September, and endure the often chilly mornings October brings. Besides dedication, the lure is strong to see wild birds up close.

We owe a very special tribute to **Karen Manuell**, bird banding volunteer coordinator. Without her years long dedication, organization and countless hours touching base with former and potential volunteers to create a schedule, the banding station could not operate as successfully as it does. *Now...if only we could call in the birds...*

Bird Species banded in 2023 at the Connected Lakes Banding Station...

- Audubon's Warbler
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Bewick's Wren
- Bushtit
- Cassin's Vireo
- Dusky Flycatcher
- White-crowned Sparrow
- House Finch
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- MacGillivray's Warbler
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Northern Flicker
- Slate-colored Junco
- Song Sparrow
- Spotted Towhee
- Western Flycatcher
- Wilson's Warbler

A Huge Thank You to Our Volunteers!

Cary Atwood
Kate Bush
Jenn Brown
Nicole Cook
Jeanne Crouch

Alice de Anguera
Pam Laumen
Suzie Garner
Hannah Judge
Darren Lawler

Marty McDanel
Karen Manuell
David Manuell
Bill Schneider
Julie Schneider

Lori Shuler
Clara Smith
Nancy Slipka
Steve Slipka
Mary Young

Kay Wilmesher

**Total Hours:
261.5**

BIRD CALLINGS



Bird Walk Organizers Needed!

Bird Walks are one of Grand Valley Audubon Society's most popular events but, unfortunately, we are unable to find enough people to lead these walk. We would like to try a new approach for our organization. We would like people to be a Bird Walk Organizer rather than a leader. You would identify an area where you love to bird and set a date and time for people to meet. Identifying birds would be a group effort rather than relying on an "expert".

Are you interested? Please call, text, or email Pam Lauman at 970-379-4872 or pamggl@gmail.com

Thanks for all you do to support Grand Valley Audubon Society!

GVAS Looking to Expand Programs and Increase Activities – Would You Like to Volunteer?

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 (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!

Audubon Membership Information

Grand Valley Audubon Society has 174 local members but over 600 Audubon National members live in our area. We need 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.

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 and current payment.

We appreciate your support.

www.AudubonGV.org



7/22/23
Check out the GVAS Photo Gallery here.

Whether you're an experienced birder, or just want to learn more about the amazing wildlife and important habitats in the Grand Valley and Mesa County, we're glad you stopped by!

Grand Valley Audubon strives to provide information, education, and activities to help everyone get outside and connect with the spectacular natural area we call home.

DID YOU KNOW...

If you are a National Audubon Member (and receive the magazine) less than \$2.00 of your dues are returned to your local Grand Valley Audubon (GVAS) chapter! We ask you to join us locally because 100% remains local and directly benefits local chapter activities. **Thank you!**

Photo: Black-throated Gray Warbler, photo by Lori Shuler, Saddlehorn Campground, Colorado National Monument.

JOIN GVAS TODAY!

GET THE MFOA ENEWS

DONATE

**THANK YOU TO PABLO'S PIZZA!
THE PIZZA FUNDRAISER
TOTALLED \$868!**

**And Thank You to all those who
ordered from Pablo's in September!**

2023 Nature Preserve BioBlitz *By Logan Wagner*

On September 23rd, volunteers gathered to contribute to the second annual Grand Valley Audubon Bioblitz at the 58-acre Nature Preserve on 610 Dike Road. A Bioblitz is a globally recognized community-science event where participants submit photos of various species of life to iNaturalist, an app, and website dedicated to identifying and inventorying the natural world. The event is very similar to that of a “Big Day” in birding terms where the goal is to identify as many species as possible, but for this event, it doesn’t stop with birds. Insects, plants, mammals, reptiles, fungi, microorganisms, birds, and fish are all countable during a Bioblitz.

89 species of life were identified in the span of a morning, and the effort increased the known list of species on the preserve to 386 species! Of these include 214 bird species, 97 plant species, and 58 insect species, inventoried between iNaturalist and eBird.

These findings help the Grand Valley Audubon Society board make sound decisions when managing critical wetlands habitat in the Nature Preserve that benefit all native species.



Variegated Meadowhawk
Photo by Nic Korte

You can increase the known species list on iNaturalist any time of the year by submitting a photo taken within the Preserve property line. See you there next fall!



GRAND VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY A YEAR IN REVIEW 2023



Fall Bird Banding
18 species, **117** birds banded
21 volunteers, **261** hours
2 hired educators
911 students from **18** schools



Western Screech Owl Project
217 Boxes Monitored
2022 Christmas Count: **101 Owls!**
60 Volunteers with **372 hours**



Mesa County Spring Count
12 Area Leaders
145 bird species



Preserve Work Days
35 participants, **2** days



Educational Programming
10 In-person Programs
13 Lead Bird Walks



Christmas Bird Count (2022)
14 area leaders
102 bird species, **64** participants



Bluebird Box Routes
3 Bluebird Route Volunteers
700 miles, **105** hours
Monitoring and Maintenance



Audubon Preserve Bioblitz 2023
89 species, **113** observations
386 species for all time

Be someone birds can count on – so our chapter can soar!

Give a Gift during our 2023 Annual Appeal