



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/MARCH 2015/VOL 51 NO 3 [HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://dfobirds.org)

Field Trips

DIA Raptor Alley Saturday, March 7 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Chris Goulart (Email:
cgoulart001@comcast.net
Phone: 586-764-2126)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 7

Directions: Meet at Airport
Bldv/40th Ave Park-n-Ride,
3900 Salida St, Aurora, CO
80011.

From I-70 take Airport Rd Exit
(NOT Pena Blvd Exit). Go north
on Airport Rd and take your first
right on East 40th St and right
on Salida. Take a right into the
parking lot and park.

Bring lunch, water, snacks,
and scopes (if you have them).

We will be stopping at Barr
Lake later so if you have a State
Parks pass, that may be helpful.

This is an exploration of
Colorado's northeast prairie for
raptors, shrikes, and other late
winter birds.

**Please register online or
contact leader to register.**

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DFO deadline looms!

March 1 is the cut-off date
for sending *The Lark Bunting* to
those who have not paid their
2015 dues.

Please renew online (working
well now) at <www.dfobirds.org>
using PayPal or credit card.

Or send a check and applica-
tion to Mary Cay Burger, 10826
E Maplewood Pl, Englewood
CO 80111.

Black Swifts in Colorado and beyond

An overview of Black Swift research in Colorado, including the DNA project, will be presented by Carolyn Gunn at the DFO meeting February 23. In addition, there will be an update on the breeding phenology of Black Swifts at Box Canyon, a continuing project for which DFO funding in 2014 was provided.

In the mid-1990s, when the Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*) (BLSW) was designated as a U.S. Forest Service Sensitive Species, a statewide inventory for this species in Colorado was begun. Over the next decade, more than 400 waterfalls were surveyed with 109 of the sites confirmed as Black Swift nesting sites, more than any other U.S. state.

Little was known about this enigmatic species when surveys were started in Colorado, and a small core group of researchers was eager to discover more about this species.

Interest was initiated by Kim Potter, Wildlife Biologist with the White River Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service; Rich Levad, then the Special Monitoring Projects Coordinator at Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory; Chris Schultz, Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, San Juan National Forest; and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program.

Since that time, Kim Potter; Jason Beason, now the Special Monitoring

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Carolyn Gunn and Black Swift chick at Fulton Resurgence Cave. *Todd Patrick*

Field Trips

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Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, March 8

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP.

From either park entrance, follow Lake View Rd to the Prairie Loop that is located at the south rim of the reservoir. State Parks pass or day pass required.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS TODAY. BE SURE TO ARRIVE AT THE CORRECT TIME.

This is a half-day trip passing through many important habitats in 3 miles.

Check weather predictions and dress accordingly. Bring water and snacks; lunch optional. Beginning birders welcome.

Please register online or contact leader to register.

Wheat Ridge Greenbelt

Saturday, March 14

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: From I-70 exit 267, take Kipling south about 0.75 mile and turn right (west) on 44th Ave. Go one mile west.

Look for the entrance to Prospect Park on your left (south).

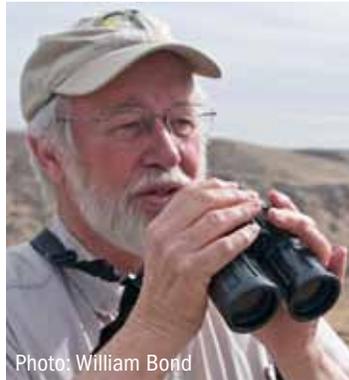
Meet just inside the park in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

Bring water and snacks and we will see what we can scare up.

Ducks, gulls, finches, sparrows, raptors to be expected with waxwings and nuthatches possible. You never know what

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DFO celebrates 80 years enjoying birds



From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

This year marks the 80th anniversary of Denver Field Ornithologists and the 50th anniversary of *The Lark Bunting*.

Over the years since its founding, DFO (originally Colorado Bird Club) has helped generations of birders learn about and enjoy birds of the Front Range through programs and field trips.

When *The Lark Bunting* was established, one of its major missions was reporting of the club's regular field trips.

Today, DFO's current trip reports have a home at eBird where they are accessible to a wider audience. DFO members who

want to view the reports can easily do so through the club's website, <www.dfobirds.org>.

Trip leaders enter their reports of DFO field trips on eBird within a few days of the trip. Each report has a number, and the leader posts the number on the DFO website.

You can access any trip report by opening the Field Trips tab at the top of the home page. On the pull-down menu, click Past Trip Reports. You'll see a list of recent field trips.

When you click on the name of any completed field trip, there is a box with a number beginning with S. It looks like this: S21405724. Clicking on the number will open the eBird checklist for that trip.

If a trip had more than one stop there may be more than one "S" number. Because most trip leaders are entering their data and S numbers within a few days of the trip, these reports are very timely.

The Lark Bunting, including past issues, can also be found on the website, though some members still prefer to receive the printed edition. The website, however, allows us to get news to members in a more timely way. For example, our site designer Ann Johnson recently added a feature that allows trip leaders to post notice of trip cancellations.

If one of our famous Colorado snow storms is threatening, you can check the website to see if a field trip you were planning on has been cancelled.

Sometimes there is confusion about changes that have come along with the website. For example, we encourage people to sign up for field trips on the website and it is easy to do so.

That allows participants to sign a waiver online, which is valid for all trips in the future. And it provides the leaders with emergency contact information for the trip.

However, if you don't sign up online, please contact the leader to register. Some trips have a maximum number of participants. For those, it is advisable to register online early so you aren't listed on a wait list.

Similarly, the website now makes it easy for members to renew online. For those who prefer, however, you can still send in your dues by mail or renew membership at the monthly meeting.

BLACK SWIFTS IN COLORADO, continued from page 1

Projects Coordinator for RMBO; and Carolyn Gunn, citizen scientist, have carried on the work.

With the help of many donations, grants, and volunteers, we have been unraveling the mysteries of the Black Swift. Nesting ecology requirements, nesting microclimate, diet, and phenology for this species in Colorado were determined through various projects.

And for the first time, the migration routes and wintering areas were discovered. Now we are moving deeper into the secrets of the Black Swift by examining the genetic building blocks of the species.

To date, no genetic studies of BLSW exist, yet powerful new DNA analysis techniques can give us great insight into a species. Information on overall genetic population structure, degree of genetic connectivity among colonies, colony site fidelity of individual birds, paternity, and evidence of historical processes responsible for the contemporary geographic distributions of individuals can be determined.

Denver Field Ornithologists has contributed to this project, helping make possible the analysis of Black Swift DNA. Approximately 100 blood and feather samples have been collected from Black Swifts during routine banding sessions over the past nine years and are being analyzed by the USGS FORT Molecular Ecology Laboratory in Ft. Collins.

DNA has been extracted from the samples and specific markers have been identified that can be used to determine individual traits. Once all of the DNA samples have been compared to these markers, final analysis will delineate the degree of relatedness among individual Colorado Black Swifts and among statewide colonies.

All Black Swift genetic sequencing information will be deposited with GenBank®, the National Institutes of Health annotated collection of all publicly available DNA sequences, providing other avian researchers access to this information.

This work is the first phase of future investigations into genetic connectivity among North American populations of the subspecies *Cypseloides niger borealis* and how Colorado's Black Swifts relate to other North American, Central American, and West Indian populations.

The DFO meeting is at 7:30 p.m. in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium.

Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.



Adult female Black Swift and chick at nest at Box Canyon Falls. Carolyn Gunn

Field Trips

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will be sheltering in this tree rich area.

Please register online or contact leader to register.

Roxborough State Park Sunday, March 15 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Doris Cruze (Email: cruzeduo@aol.com Phone: 303-798-8072)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Take S Wadsworth Blvd past Chatfield SP to Waterton Rd on left.

Take Waterton Rd 1.6 miles east to North Rampart Range Road. Turn right and go south 2.3 miles to Roxborough Park Rd.

Turn left (east) onto Roxborough Park Rd and then turn immediately right (south) on Roxborough Rd and follow signs to the Park (2.2 miles).

We will take an easy walk through the red rocks valley looking for resident jays, towhees, golden eagles, and maybe some early migrants.

There is a \$6 fee for a day pass (bring correct change) or you can purchase an annual pass at the Visitor Center.

Bring water and a snack. The trip will end before noon, but if you want to bring a lunch, there is a patio with picnic tables.

Please register online or contact leader to register.

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County) Sunday, March 22 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger (Email: mcburger3@juno.com Phone: 303-771-3431)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Enter at the EAST entrance to the Park from South Parker Road.

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