



# THE PRIMARY SOURCE

*Our mission is to conserve birds and their habitats.*

## Six Years of Conservation Efforts for Mountain Plover in Colorado and Nebraska

*By Ross Lock, Mountain Plover Program Manager*

The Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, in partnership with a group of federal and state agencies, is working to help the Mountain Plover. Implemented in 2003, the goal of the Mountain Plover Nest Conservation in Cultivated Fields Project was to increase landowner awareness of the plover and to identify and mark nests in fields before cultivation activity to minimize nest loss.

We started with a handful of landowners and 16,000 acres in 2003. By 2008, 200 private landowners were participating in the project, enrolling more than 285,000 acres of farmland.

During the six-year project, we marked 700 nests with wooden lathes painted bright orange. Each participating landowner received a field map showing locations of individual nests. The project was a huge success, thanks in large part to the support and active participation of landowners. Of the nests with known outcomes, 60 percent to 80 percent were successful at producing at least one chick.

The continental population of this bird, nicknamed the “Prairie Ghost” for its habit of turning its back on intruders and standing motionless so that its drab color makes it virtually disappear, has declined by approximately 60 percent since 1966. The current population ranges from 11,000 to 14,000 individuals.

The Mountain Plover breeds in the western Great Plains states on flat, bare ground in



Mountain Plover chicks and egg. *Photo by Ross Lock*

shortgrass prairies and agricultural fields with sparse short vegetation. More than 80 percent of that breeding habitat in Colorado and Nebraska is privately owned, and the majority of landowners are agricultural producers. We estimate that at least 30 percent of Mountain Plover in Colorado and 90 percent in Nebraska nest on cultivated farmland.

Outreach efforts revealed that many landowners were familiar with the Mountain Plover, but most were not aware that plovers nest on cultivated fields. Depending on the timing or the farm implements being used to work the fields, nests could be lost or damaged. The Nest Conservation Project provided RMBO a means for identifying and marking nests prior to cultivation. It was developed through cooperative efforts with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, U.S. Geological Survey, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The project was funded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Nebraska Environmental Trust, and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Landowners developed a keen interest in the Mountain Plover and took pride and ownership in the nests found on their land. Many became actively involved in finding nests and reporting nesting birds. For them, locating and avoiding nests is a farming ethic.

A family in southeastern Colorado has three generations farming its land and all three—grandfather, son, and grandson—have found Mountain

Plover nests while cultivating their fields. Another participating landowner in northeastern Colorado expressed an interest in locating and identifying Mountain Plover nests. Our biologist provided information and showed him a nest on a neighbor’s land. A week later, he found two nests while cultivating one of his fields.

The Nest Conservation Project is a model of conservation agencies and organizations working hand in hand with private landowners to address a conservation concern by developing a program with conservation merit that also fits the needs of agricultural producers. It has shown how non-regulatory efforts can promote the conservation of an at-risk species on private land. The Mountain Plover is recognized as a species of special conservation concern in Colorado, Montana, Oklahoma, and California, as in need of conservation in Kansas, and as a threatened species in Nebraska.

More landowners throughout the eastern plains of Colorado and western Nebraska

*Continued on page 2*



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## From the director...

*Tammy VerCauteren, Executive Director*

I remember that when I started at the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory 10 years ago as a biologist, winter was the time to breathe a little and recover from the previous field season. Now we use the winter months to conduct monitoring efforts in Mexico, to wrap up reports and analyses, to finalize and announce upcoming educational programs, and to start the hiring process for skilled birders for our upcoming field season. The activity in our offices has become year-round, and the energy is contagious.



Our Bald Eagle Watch volunteers are in full swing, monitoring nests along the Front Range to determine if nest sites are active, if eagles are incubating, if young are starting to hatch. This core team is helping the observatory, the Colorado Division of Wildlife and other partners keep tabs on this Front Range population. With some new help and funding, this effort may expand to the South Platte River. Local adoption and investment in these amazing birds is critical for keeping an eye on our national symbol. We will keep you posted on developments.

We appreciate your continued support of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. It's your commitment and dedication that are helping us fulfill our mission. You will read in this newsletter about progress we are making, new grants and pursuits we are initiating, and the myriad educational opportunities we are providing students. You are integral to these efforts through your partnership, membership and support. In these tough economic times, it is more important than ever to know your hard-earned dollar is going to good causes. You can be confident we are taking your investment to the ground and making a difference for bird conservation.

This edition of our Primary Source just scratches the surface of what observatory staff and volunteers are up to for 2009 and beyond. Visit our Web site to keep apprised of upcoming events and to keep your finger on the pulse of our conservation efforts.

#### Send us your contact information

*RMBO staff are in the midst of updating our contact information for members, partners, and friends. We are making plans for more digital correspondence (including the newsletter, for those who want to receive it electronically), so please send an e-mail to [karri.claridge@rmbo.org](mailto:karri.claridge@rmbo.org) with your current contact information, including your phone number.*

## Mountain Plover Conservation (from page 1)

are now aware of this unique, semi-arid shorebird species and are willing to help conserve it, so we are transitioning to a landowner-led initiative. Nest marking is being phased out, as landowners will locate and avoid nests on their own during cultivation activities. A brochure titled "Got Plover? We Need You," a landowner guide to identifying and locating Mountain Plover and their nests, is being distributed to farmers and ranchers throughout the breeding range in eastern Colorado. Information on breeding distribution, nesting habitat, and how landowners can help conserve Mountain Plover on their land is included. Landowner training workshops on Mountain Plover will be conducted in 2009.

# The Second South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas is Here

by Nancy Drilling, Atlas project coordinator

*"It has been so rewarding being out and birding with a purpose! The added bonus of getting to know little-known areas is excellent too!" Jennifer, 2008 atlaser*

Exactly 20 years after the start of surveys for the first South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas, field work for the state's second atlas began in summer 2008. Five staff and 11 volunteers visited 104 blocks at least once, with a total of 1,036 hours spent surveying the blocks. These atlasers recorded 206 species; 75 percent were confirmed as breeding. This compares favorably with the 219 breeding species found during the first atlas. The Mourning Dove was the most frequently reported species in 2008 and in the first atlas. Atlasers reported four species in 2008 that were not reported during the first atlas: Sandhill Crane, Herring Gull, Cassin's Sparrow, and Eurasian Collared-Dove. In addition, the Caspian Tern was never confirmed nesting during the first atlas but was confirmed nesting in 2008.

*Notes on a Spink County landowner's reaction to results of our atlas survey on his land: "Interested in project and very proud of his native grasslands and the good condition they are in. Fascinated to have a heron rookery on his land, but did not know it was there until I told him about it."*



The best proof of breeding in a Breeding Bird Atlas is to find a nest, such as this Bell's Vireo nest.

Photo by Jim Taulman

## Why do a second atlas?

*"The biggest threat to these priority bird species is drainage of wetlands and tillage of native habitats for agriculture." Kristel Bakker, 2005 South Dakota All Bird Conservation Plan*

A breeding bird atlas is a relatively simple grid-based survey that aims to map the distribution of all bird species breeding in a state. Most of the data are being collected

by volunteer citizen-scientists who wish to contribute to our knowledge of South Dakota birds and to have fun. The second atlas, scheduled to run from 2008 through 2012, is funded by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and is coordinated by RMBO.

Since the first atlas began in 1988, South Dakota's landscape has changed as a result of human activities and natural processes. In addition, land-use changes in the upcoming years could be staggering, with increasing Conservation Reserve Program lands converted out of the program, biofuels production, wind farm development, and urbanization, to name a few trends of concern. Most likely, these landscape-level changes are impacting South Dakota's breeding birds.

The goal of the second South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas is to document the distribution of every bird species that nests in South Dakota and to compare these distributions to those of the first atlas (1988-1992). The information will support the efforts of land-use planners, conservation decision-makers, researchers, educators, students, and bird enthusiasts to maintain healthy bird populations and conserve avian diversity within South Dakota.

## How does the Breeding Bird Atlas work?

*"I am looking forward to doing my block for the length of the project. I know there are many more species out there that I can find. Can't wait for spring!" Mark, Sioux Falls atlaser*

Atlasers conduct their surveys within 3-mile-by-3-mile, randomly-selected blocks of land. By the close of the second atlas in 2012, we will have attempted to survey 425 random blocks, 5 percent of the state's land area.

To document all breeding birds within a block, atlasers search all habitat types within the block for bird presence and evidence of breeding. Observations are categorized as possible, probable, or confirmed breeding—based on a series of standardized criteria—within a species' breeding season, which is defined by bird experts in South Dakota as periods when it is safe to assume that the birds are local breeders and not just migrants passing through. Adequate surveying of each block takes about 20 hours and at least three visits



during the five-year atlas period. To gain information outside the designated blocks, the atlas encourages anyone to submit observations of *confirmed* breeding by any species anywhere within the state. Criteria for what constitutes confirmed breeding can be found at [www.rmbo.org/SDBBA2](http://www.rmbo.org/SDBBA2)

Expected benefits of the second atlas include:

- More complete and up-to-date knowledge of breeding-bird species status and distribution.
- More complete understanding of changes in breeding-bird populations over the last 20 years.
- More complete knowledge of bird-habitat associations.
- Identification of species that have declined over the past 20 years and that may be in need of conservation efforts.
- Establishment of a baseline for future surveys and atlases.
- Creation of a valuable resource for researchers, land managers, land-use planners, students, agency personnel, educators, birders, and others.
- Increased interest in birds among the general public and a citizen-science opportunity for knowledgeable birders.

## You can help

*"... one of the best jobs I've ever had." Jim, 2008 atlaser*

- Volunteer to survey atlas blocks.
- Report ANY and ALL confirmed breeding anywhere in the state.
- Be a regional coordinator.
- Be part of the steering committee.
- Make a contribution!

*"I just returned from five days out and about in Meade Co! Two thoughts... allergies and fresh cut hay!" Jennifer, 2008 atlaser*

For more information, visit the atlas Web site at [www.rmbo.org/SDBBA2](http://www.rmbo.org/SDBBA2) or contact Nancy Drilling, project coordinator, at [SDatlascoordinator@rmbo.org](mailto:SDatlascoordinator@rmbo.org)

## Who Was that Masked Bird?

“That camp robber stole my cookie!”

“Was that a Gray Jay? A Blue Jay? A Steller’s Jay?”

Have you ever wondered about the dozens of birds you see in the foothills and nearby mountains? To answer the questions you probably have, RMBO is teaming up with Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) to offer a unique natural history program. RMBO will present a seminar about the birds in our region and offer tips to identify them. Then, RMBO and CMC leaders will lead three hikes to point out those birds.

The seminar will take place at the American Mountaineering Center, 710 10th St., in Golden at 7 p.m., Thursday, **April 23**. A fee of \$3 for members of the mountain club or RMBO, and \$10 for nonmembers, will be charged at the door. RMBO biologist Jeff Birek will show us how to recognize the birds by their sight, sound, and behavior. Jeff has trained bird surveyors in the Rocky Mountains, assisted with the reintroduction of Bald Eagles on the California Channel Islands, and counted birds of prey at the world’s largest raptor migration in Veracruz, Mexico. This summer he will train and coordinate bird monitoring teams in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Jeff is looking forward to sharing his expertise and enthusiasm for birds with you.

To put what you learn to use, three hikes, free of charge, have been scheduled into different life zones—plains, foothills, and montane. While we look for the birds, hike leaders will teach about the habitats in each life zone. We’ll be on the lookout for male territorial displays, hummingbird aerial “dances,” mates counter-singing, nest-building, and other interesting bird behaviors.

The first trip is scheduled for **May 16**, taking us to the plains zone of Bear Creek Lake Park, just east of Morrison. There, we could find up to 60 species. We could see a dozen or more species of waterfowl and shorebirds, including the secretive Sora, the huge American White Pelican, and the gorgeous Wood Duck. Swainson’s Hawks have nested here consistently, and Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels are prevalent. We may even see Osprey.

A couple of different woodpeckers, flycatchers, and vireos are likely, as are four or five swallows, Black-capped Chickadee, House Wren, American Dipper, kinglets, gnatcatchers, and two or three warblers. If we’re lucky, we’ll also find some migrating warblers passing through. Five sparrow species are possible, along with Red-winged Blackbirds, Western Meadowlarks, Bullock’s Orioles and several finches.

The second hike is scheduled for **June 6** at Lair o’ the Bear Park, west of Morrison. Here we’ll look for raptors, including Cooper’s Hawks and Northern Pygmy-Owls, along with Brown Creepers, grosbeaks, tanagers, catbirds, Cedar Waxwings, up to five different warblers, and the stunning Mountain Bluebird. The third trip will be to Summit Lake on the Mount Evans road on **July 25**. In this higher altitude location, we will look for White-tailed Ptarmigan, Brown-capped Rosy-Finches, Horned Larks, Dusky Grouse, and American Pipits.

For more information, go to our Web site, [www.rmbo.org](http://www.rmbo.org)

## Upcoming Events

### Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory Bird Camp

Birds provide unique introductions to how living beings are connected. Weekly themes allow kids to discover and develop their own connection to the outdoors.

Dates: June 9-12 (ages 7 & 8), June 16-19 (ages 9 & 10), June 23-26

(ages 11 & 12) and July 7-11th (ages 10, 11 & 12)

Time: 8:30-12:30 Tues-Thurs and 8:30-2:30 Fridays

Location: 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80601

Cost: \$75.00; \$65.00 for RMBO members

Contact: Cassy Bohnet at 303-659-4348 x15 or [cassy.bohnet@rmbo.org](mailto:cassy.bohnet@rmbo.org)

### Chautauqua lecture series

RMBO is teaming up with the Colorado Chautauqua Association to present a bird festival and a series of lectures this summer. All lectures will begin at 7 p.m. at the Chautauqua headquarters, 900 Baseline Rd., in Boulder. Admission is \$5, which benefits RMBO and the Colorado Chautauqua Association. Tickets will be available at the Chautauqua box office or at their website ([www.chautauqua.com](http://www.chautauqua.com)).

May 31: Family Bird Festival / IMBD

June 8: “Birding in the Front Range,” Greg Levandoski, RMBO Biologist, International Program

June 15: “Shortgrass Prairie Birds,” Seth Gallagher, RMBO Stewardship Division Director

July 20: “The West Mexico Connection,” Arvind Panjabi, International Program Director

Aug. 10: “Banded Bird Stories, and How we are Connected,” Seth Gallagher; Jennifer Blakesley RMBO Biometrician, Tammy VerCauteren, RMBO Executive Director

### RMBO picnic and open house

RMBO’s annual picnic and open house is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 29, at the Old Stone House. As always, we’ll have a bird banding station, birding field trips, fun activities, and informational presentations. More details will follow in the Summer newsletter.

## Anniversary T-shirt Sale!

For those of you who haven’t yet gotten your RMBO 20th Anniversary T-shirt, now is your best opportunity. The shirts are **25 percent off**, selling for \$15 instead of \$20. Adult unisex and youth sizes are limited—we have only large, extra large and double-extra large left for adults, and medium and large for youth—so get your order in ASAP. In the women’s cut (shorter sleeves and a scoop neck) and youth sizes, we have sizes extra small through extra large available, but you still shouldn’t wait. We think they’ll go fast. Use the order form on page 8.



20 Years of Bird Conservation • 1988-2008

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# 2009 Spring Education Programs

## Nests and Niches

March 16- April 17

Grades 1-4

Program fee: \$4 per student

Duration: 1.5 hours

Meets Colorado science standards 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6

Please note there is a \$6 per vehicle Colorado State Parks entrance fee for programs taking place at Barr Lake State Park.

In the spring the rookery at Barr Lake comes alive with many different species of nesting birds. Participants observe Double-Crested Cormorants, Great Blue Herons, Bald Eagles and many species of songbirds attending to nests and nestlings. This program allows participants to experience the amazingly productive wildlife oasis just outside Metro Denver where they learn how and why nearly 80 different species are able to coexist by using different parts of this ecosystem.

## Bald Eagle Watch

March 30-May 28

Grade 3 - Adult

Program fee: \$4 per student

Duration: 1.5 hours

Meets Colorado science standards 1, 3, 5, and 6

Please note there is a \$6 per vehicle Colorado State Parks entrance fee for programs taking place at Barr Lake State Park.

Since 1986, Barr Lake State Park has been home to one of Colorado's most successful pairs of breeding Bald Eagles. Each spring, RMBO takes participants to the Wildlife Refuge at Barr Lake to see nesting eagles and learn about the natural history and conservation status of Bald Eagles. Program participants will learn how to use binoculars to view the birds, and educators will teach about eagle adaptations, their habitat needs and the successful recovery of this once-endangered species.



## Young Biologists

Available year round

Grade 3-4, may be tailored to other grades and ages as well.

Program fee: \$4 per student. Scholarships available, please inquire about eligibility and availability.

Duration: 1-3 hours

Meets Colorado science standards 1, 2, 3, 5; geography standards 1, 2, 3; and mathematics standards 1, 2, 3

Students will learn what a banding station is, what information is collected there, and how it is collected. Students will be assigned a bird, be banded themselves and learn more about each bird that migrates through the banding station. They will use data gathered at banding stations to learn how to interpret scientific data, including analyzing and developing graphs and figures. They will use information collected in conjunction with maps and other visual aids to help understand migratory connections and shared responsibility for environmental stewardship across local and international boundaries including the United States, Canada and Mexico. They will learn how monitoring bird populations can be used to assess impacts and change to the environment.

## HawkWatch

March 16-May 9

Grades 3 - Adult

Program fee: \$4 per student

Duration: 2 hours

Thousands of hawks use the Dakota Hogback area near Golden as a migration route to their summer breeding grounds. For 16 years biologists have gathered data on raptor migration at the Dakota Hogback. RMBO's HawkWatch program takes participants to the ridge to see how the geologic features influence the hawks' flight and why such large numbers of birds are moving through that area in the spring. Educators will teach about the different types of hawks that may be seen, their adaptations to specific habitats, and the differences between hawk species and other raptors.

To schedule any of these programs, please contact Kacie Ehrenberger 303-659-4348, ext 16, or [kacie.ehrenberger@rmbo.org](mailto:kacie.ehrenberger@rmbo.org)

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## Interpretive Planning at the Old Stone House

We're inviting you, members and partners of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, to help us develop plans to turn the Old Stone House into an environmental/stewardship center for birds. The observatory is teaming up with the National Association of Interpretation to continue developing plans to expand our connections within the community and create a center that marries the agricultural and natural history of the area. The Old Stone House at Barr Lake sits at the gateway between the mountains and the plains, and is also at the crossroads of bird migration. The association will facilitate a week-long class in interpretive planning June 1-5 at the Old Stone House in Brighton. RMBO staff, board members and partners will participate, as will interpreters from the United States and abroad.

You are welcome to enroll in the course, which is open to any individual who is responsible for planning (from regional master planning to site-specific exhibits). Participants will work in teams to come up with a plan for the Old Stone House, with a final presentation of the plans on Friday, June 5. Even if you don't participate in the course, you are welcome to attend the Friday session. Following the course, the National Association of Interpretation will then help us compile and prioritize the recommendations we should pursue. We will share the highlights at our picnic August 29 and in our Fall newsletter.

For more information about the course and associated fees, go to [www.interpnet.com/certification/workshops/CIP\\_BrightonCO\\_Jun09.shtml](http://www.interpnet.com/certification/workshops/CIP_BrightonCO_Jun09.shtml)

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# Chico Basin Ranch Receives CDOW Landowner of the Year Award

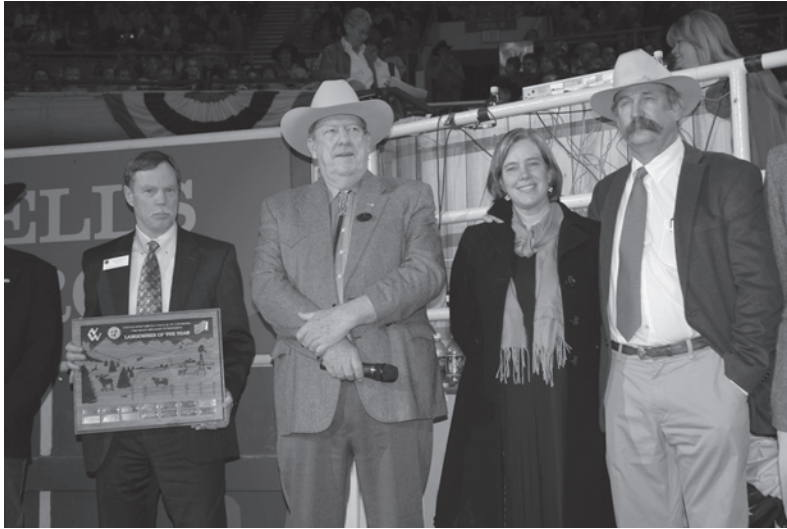
Duke and Janet Phillips and the staff at Chico Basin Ranch - longtime partners, friends and supporters of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory - received the Colorado Division of Wildlife 2008 Landowner of the Year award in January.

“Their regard for the ecosystem, their appreciation and respect for wildlife and their desire to share these values with others makes them the perfect recipient for this award,” said Ken Morgan, CDOW private lands coordinator, of the Phillips family and the ranch staff.

Chico Basin Ranch, owned by the Colorado State Land Board and managed by the Phillips family since 1999, has a long history

of wildlife stewardship and, as home to more than 300 bird species, is one of the most popular birding sites in Colorado. The ranch hosts RMBO’s well-known banding station each spring (and now fall) as well as the annual Bugs, Birds and Beasts Festival, an effort to showcase wildlife conservation efforts on private

lands, demonstrating to the public the compatibility and often necessity of ranching to provide wildlife habitat. In addition to their education efforts, the Phillips manage the ranch from an ecosystem perspective, always conscious of how management decisions influence wildlife populations.



Left to right: Tom Remington, Director of CDOW; John Stulp, Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture; Janet and Duke Phillips. *Photo by Tyler Baskfield, CDOW*

RMBO will help with the annual festival at Chico Basin Ranch, scheduled for May 9. Come out and see firsthand why the ranch and the Phillips family received this prestigious award. The festival is a fun opportunity to see birds in the hand at the banding station, have a guided tour and meet the Phillips. To learn more, visit the ranch’s Web site at [www.chicobasinranch.com](http://www.chicobasinranch.com)

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## Experience Bird Banding at Chico Basin Ranch

Teachers and students are invited to learn about the scientific process and have the rare chance to see wild birds up close at a bird-banding station at Chico Basin Ranch.

The Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory will operate the station from April 20 through May 22 in cooperation with Chico Basin Ranch, which is located 35 miles southeast of Colorado Springs. Students will be able to closely observe songbird banding and learn how biologists collect and use scientific data to monitor bird populations. Our experienced educational staff can adapt programs for all grade levels from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Chico Basin Ranch is an 87,000-acre working cattle ranch dedicated to the enhancement and preservation of our natural world, and offers educational and recreational programs to the public. In addition to learning about birds, teachers can choose to add related topics and activities, including programs on sustainable ranching practices or prairie and wetland ecosystems, and tours of the ranch’s corrals to see how animals are handled and cared for. For more information about Chico Basin Ranch, go to [www.chicobasinranch.com](http://www.chicobasinranch.com)

To schedule a field trip or receive information, please contact Pat Grove by e-mail at [scatmando49@hotmail.com](mailto:scatmando49@hotmail.com) or call (719) 475-9199; or Lee Derr by e-mail at [theriverkids2003@yahoo.com](mailto:theriverkids2003@yahoo.com) or by phone at (719) 634-2305 or (719) 338-8651.

There is no charge to visit the banding station, but a contribution would help ensure these hands-on educational opportunities continue. For more information about supporting the bird-banding station, contact Kacie Ehrenberger at [kacie.ehrenberger@rmbo.org](mailto:kacie.ehrenberger@rmbo.org) or send a check to: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Chico Basin Banding Station, P.O. Box 1232, Brighton, CO 80601

# Migration Destination Project

By Jason Beason, *Special Monitoring Projects Coordinator*

Of all the species that breed in North America, the Black Swift is one of the least understood. We don't have solid data about its migration, in part because the birds are too small to transport satellite telemetry devices for tracking their movements. Plus, in the area where we believe the swifts overwinter, there are several other species that look so similar that it is practically impossible to differentiate them visually.

Amazing new technology may help us gain knowledge, for the first time, of where Black Swifts go in the winter. The technique requires placing small devices that weigh slightly more than 1 gram on the birds, then retrieving the device from the bird after a complete migration from the breeding site to the overwintering site and back again. The devices are called light-level geolocators. When we first heard of this opportunity, we realized the potential for learning and began delving into the details. Surprisingly, the geolocators aren't terribly

expensive—about \$140 each. Some software is required for getting the data from the device into a computer, but that, too, is not expensive.

We plan to begin using this technology in August to conduct some exciting research. We will collaborate with U.S. Forest Service Biologist Kim Potter to place three of these devices on Black Swifts that breed in Colorado. This research will take place at a breeding location in the Flat Top Mountains in the White River National Forest, where Kim has been banding adults and nestling Black Swifts since 1998. We have initiated the permit process for placing the devices on swifts and are currently attempting to raise funds to pay for the research.

If you would like to support this project, donations can be made to:  
The Richard G. Levad Memorial Fund at RMBO  
P.O. Box 1232  
Brighton, Colorado 80601-1232

## Staff Migrations

### In...

**Linda Detroy Alexander** joined the RMBO staff in March as the communications specialist. She'll be working to publicize the organization's mission and to get the word out about what RMBO's staff and volunteers are doing to conserve birds and their habitats. Linda is a native of Wisconsin, earning her journalism degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has worked as a columnist and editorial writer. An amateur birder, she's looking forward to soaking up knowledge about birds while working at the Old Stone House in Brighton and helping staff with their projects.



**Cassy Bohnet** is the new education assistant at RMBO's Brighton office. Cassy studied at the University of Northern Iowa, where she received her bachelor's degree in biology education and her professional science master's degree in ecosystem management. She moved from the Iowa plains to the mountains of Colorado in August 2008. As a graduate student, she worked on a prairie biomass research project at the Tallgrass Prairie Center at the University of Northern Iowa, where she decided to combine her teaching skills with her knowledge of ecosystems to work as an environmental educator. Cassy gained experience in the environmental education field as an intern at the Lost Island Nature Center in Ruthven, Iowa.



**Karri Claridge** has been in the accounting field for nine years and is currently working toward her accounting degree at Front Range Community College. She grew up in Denver, and now lives in Brighton with her husband and four children, and loves wildlife. RMBO, where Karri began working in February 2009, is a perfect fit for her because she wants to live in Brighton forever and RMBO is an important part of her community.



**Kacie Ehrenberger**, RMBO's new director of education and outreach, comes to us from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, where she first worked for the nongame and endangered species program and then as the aquatic resources education coordinator. She received a bachelor's degree in forestry and wildlife from Virginia Tech and is a devoted Hokies fan. She received her master's degree in forestry and natural resources from Purdue University, where she studied the bird and amphibian response to a wetland restoration project. Kacie believes education plays a vital role in conservation, and she looks forward to leading education programs and outreach events. She is based at the Old Stone House.



### Out...

**Glenn Giroir** started working at RMBO in 1998 when our office was a small trailer. He worked in both our education and monitoring programs, running bird banding stations, helping to run the *On the Wing* summer camps, leading inventory and monitoring projects for the National Park Service, and conducting fieldwork, data analysis, and report writing for the Colorado, Wyoming, and Black Hills monitoring programs. Glenn is sad to leave RMBO, but is pursuing his passion of teaching. He is currently finishing a teacher licensure program at Western State College and teaching physics and biology at Montrose High School.



**Starr Nicely** became involved with RMBO in 2005 through the Bald Eagle Watch program and has since operated several banding stations, sampled bird populations for avian disease such as West Nile Virus and Avian Influenza, and worked on other monitoring projects for RMBO. Starr also taught educational programs both inside and outside the classroom and assisted with membership and administrative duties. Her plans are to practice nursing after graduating in May 2010 from the University of Colorado-Denver College of Nursing and to continue working in the area of wildlife conservation as a volunteer.





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