

Denver Audubon History

1968



Lois Webster and Elaine Appel, members of the Denver Field Ornithologists (DFO), propose becoming a chapter of the National Audubon Society (NAS). DFO voted not to affiliate. A splinter group pursued Audubon affiliation: Elaine Appel, Josephine Cosner, David Johnson, Hugh Kingery, Warner Reeser, Mildred Snyder, Don Thatcher, Frank Starzel, Con Tolman, Lois Webster, and Vincent Winn. Splinter group holds first official meeting. Dr. David Johnson chosen President.

1969

- DAS incorporated by eleven founding Directors.
- National Audubon Society awards full chapter status to DAS as the first NAS chapter in Colorado.
- First newsletter published.
- First program: lecture and film on "The Poisoning of Wildlife," held at the Denver Museum of Natural History.
- First field trip: observing hawks in the vicinity of Barr Lake.

1970

- V. Crane (Vim) Wright spearheads television program, "Environmental Hotline."

1975

- First Grassland Institute held with funding assistance from Exxon Corporation and Public Service Company
- First art show held at Denver Museum of Natural History.

1976

- Substantial grant received from Gates Foundation to coordinate production of environmental film, "In Winter's Domain."

1977

- First lobbyist supports Senate Bill 480, the Colorado Natural Areas Act, drafted by DAS Conservation Committee.
- Volunteers put great effort into successful backing of Natural Areas Act and Non-Game Income Tax Refund Check-Off Program.
- Conservation Committee participates in founding Denver Clean Air Coalition.

1978

- Newsletter name *Denver Audubon Warbler* selected by Board.
- Grassland Nature Center at Grover, CO, established in cooperation with Pawnee Historical Society, with funding assistance from Wyoming Mineral Corporation, Atlantic Richfield Corporation (ARCO), and Boulder Audubon Society.
- Fourth Grassland Institute held.
- ECHO project (Education Children Outdoors) assists teachers in urban environment.

1979

- Tenth anniversary dinner held.

1980

- First Birdathon held.

1982

- Grant received from Colorado Humanities for production of "Women of the Grasslands" (slide show and video tape).

1983

- Board adopts South Platte River watershed as primary organizational focus.
- Planning for Urban Education Project (UEP) begins.
- Roger Troy Peterson appears at Open House program at Denver Botanic Gardens.
- First birdseed sale held.
- Linda Hamlin represents chapter on Denver Mayor Pena's Environmental Task Force.

1984

- Executive Committee formed. Bylaws revised.
- Urban Education Project (UEP) begins.

1985

- Birdseed sale expanded to second sale in January.
- National Science Foundation (NSF) awards two year grant for Urban Education Project.

1986

- Major fundraising initiated to continue Education Project after expiration of NSF grant.
- South Platte River Riparian Institute planned for 1987.

1987

- UEP awarded JC Penny's Golden Rule Award for "exceptional volunteer services".
- Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas and South Platte Riparian Institute established.
- DAS opposes Two Forks Dam.

1988

- DAS celebrates its 20th anniversary.
- UEP Founder's Club established.
- Three-year National Science Foundation grant approved for UEP project start-ups in other cities.
- DAS produces Wildlife Habitat Map.

1989

- DAS joins Urban Wildlife Partnership.
- Policy statements on Barr Lake Buffer Zone and protecting wildlife in the Rocky Mountain Arsenal issued.

1990

- Lois Webster forms an Aurora Open Space Group.

1991

- DAS instrumental in forming Colorado Bird Conservation Coalition, a cooperative effort to conserve and manage Colorado Bird Observatory in documenting amateur bird sightings.
- UEP is named President George H.W. Bush's 604th Point of Light.

1995

- Adopt-the Platte project awarded \$29,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.
- DAS invited to join the Mayor's Commission on the South Platte.

1996

- Pawnee Grasslands Committee holds mountain plover and shortgrass prairie workshop.
- Adopt-the-Platte conducts comprehensive vegetation survey of the urban South Platte River.
- First DAS web page established.

1997

- UEP Steering Committee dissolved and project reorganized.
- Endowment Fund established with a beginning amount of \$20,000; future goal for fund is \$200,000.
- Lois Webster Fund reaches matching grant goal of \$5,000.
- Bluebird Project awarded CAC grant. Statewide bluebird trail expanded.
- DAS adds Fall Harvest Dinner, Book Sale, Christmas Wreath Sale, Entertainment Books, and other events as fundraisers.

1998

- Denver Audubon Society changes its name to Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD).
- ASGD invited by Chatfield State Park to initiate renovation of stone buildings at the Lockheed Martin Discovery Pavilion and establish a nature center on park grounds; Audubon Nature Center Project and capital campaign begins.
- UEP changes its project name to Urban Environmental Education Project (UEEP).

1999

- Lease signed with Chatfield State Park.
- ASGD moves to quarters at 9308 S. Platte Canyon Rd. near US Army Corps of Engineers buildings while capital campaign fundraising takes place.

2003

- Over 100 people gathers to celebrate the completion of the first classroom building at the Audubon Center at Chatfield. Hugh Kingery, George Larson (Lockheed Martin), Jerry Raskin (ASGD first vice-president), Kent Wiley (Chatfield State Park Manager), and Larry Kramer (Colorado State Parks) do the ribbon cutting honors. Phase I of the Capital Campaign completed.
- ASGD receives grants from Colorado Division of Wildlife, SCFD (Arapahoe, Douglas, Jefferson), Denver Foundation, and Lockheed Martin toward educational programs and equipment for the Audubon Center.

2004

- The Audubon Center holds an Open House two times a month.

- Efforts continue on the Capital Campaign
- Polly Reetz wins the Callison Award, a national award made annually by National Audubon to recognize outstanding volunteers.
- The September BioBlitz program brings over 150 visitors to the Center to count every plant, animal, and bird on the property.
- Phase II of the Capital Campaign: ASGD volunteers begin demolishing the interior of the second stone structure at the Audubon Center.
- Kevin Corwin agrees to serve as Chairman of the Colorado Bluebird Project.

2005

- Lois Webster Fund celebrates its 10th Anniversary
- Fred Griest, described as the ultimate volunteer, and Doug Faulkner from Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory are honored at the annual awards dinner at Pinehurst Country Club.
- Naturalist in Residence program begins with author Mary Taylor Young as the lead teacher.
- Author Richard Louv visits Denver and reads excerpts from his book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficient Disorder*.
- Great Outdoors Colorado gave ASGD a \$150,000 grant to complete the amphitheater and renovations to the farm house.
- An ivory-billed woodpecker thought to be sighted in Arkansas, and "witnesses" to the sight visited Denver to give a presentation and sell their book *The Grail Bird*.
- A new trail and bird blind built at Chatfield Wetlands thanks to VOC and others.

2006

- Audubon Master Birders, a certification program, debuts with a mix of classroom instruction, field trips, and independent field study.
- The farmhouse at the Audubon Center ribbon-cutting officially opens this newly-renovated facility to house educational programs for kids and adults.
- On September 30, the 37th anniversary of ASGD's charter, the Lois Webster Outdoor Classroom (amphitheater) was dedicated with Native American dancers and drummers performing.

2007

- George Larson of Lockheed Martin and long-time activist and member Polly Reetz are honored at annual dinner & auction.
- ASGD launches its endowment fund with LMC Community Foundation matching every \$1 contribution with 50 cents while guaranteeing 5 per cent interest.

2008

- Second Audubon Master Birder class begins organizing.

- Fourth year of bird banding completed at the Audubon Center, recording more birds than any of the previous years.

2009

- ASGD celebrates 40th Anniversary Celebration
- The third Audubon Master Birder program is organized.
- Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper issued a proclamation recognizing "Safe Skies Colorado", an ASGD initiative to turn off lights in tall buildings and avoid bird strikes for migrating birds.
- ASGD starts a Facebook page.

2011

- ASGD begins to use Twitter
- New website up and running
- Fourth Audubon Master Birder program begins
- First all digital Share the View international photo contest held

2012

- New bird banding and education pavilion designed and built by students from CU Denver DEsignBuild program
- Interpretive trail using QR code technology installed by Eagle Scout, Andrew Tarr
- Piloted a new program, *Engaging Students in Research and Service Learning*, for the fourth grade at Summit View Elementary in Douglas County and with the autistic students at the Denver Green School
- Students from Metro State create interpretive displays for the Audubon Center
- Through a matching grant from Community First Foundation, ASGD raised over \$30,000 to add to the endowment
- First Audubon Naturalist training begins, including expert instructors from a variety of partner organizations

2013

- Fifth Audubon Master Birder program begins
- ASGD pilots a new *Healthy Waters Healthy Birds* program with fifth graders at East Elementary and fourth graders at Roxborough Intermediate in Littleton
- A new class of Ornithology students from Metro State create interpretive displays for the Audubon Center for bird banding
- Second Audubon Naturalist class graduates

2014

- ASGD celebrates its 45th Anniversary
- ASGD files a lawsuit to stop the Chatfield Reallocation Project

- *Healthy Waters Healthy Birds* program with fifth graders at East Elementary and expands to two fourth grade classes at Roxborough Intermediate
- Ornithology students from Metro State create an interpretive book of birds for the bird banding station
- The new Community Outreach Coordinator begins planning new programs, including Habitat for Homeschoolers
- Third Audubon Naturalist class graduates
- ASGD creates a new Legacy Society planned giving program through a grant from Community First Foundation

2015

- Sixth Audubon Master Birder program begins
- *Healthy Waters Healthy Birds* program with fifth graders at East Elementary and expands to all fourth grade classes at Roxborough Intermediate
- Hosted the first annual Bird Habitat Garden Tour in July
- Fifth Share the View international photo contest held in Fall 2015
- ASGD continues adding unique public programs and events, such as the Fathers Day Falcon Fest, Wild Colorado Art Show (in partnership with Roxborough Arts Council), and a Pet Adoption Day (in partnership with the South Platte Valley Humane Society)
- A new group of Ornithology students from Metro State add more bird pages to the interpretive book of birds for the banding station
- Fourth Audubon Naturalist class graduates

2016

- Hired our first new lead educator, Alex Collopy, to assist with school and public programs
- Hosted first "Beginning Bird Watching" class reunion, honoring instructors Hugh & Urling Kingery
- Began offering "Conservation in Colorado" adult lecture series
- Recipient of \$2500 award from the Xcel Energy Day of Service Social Media Contest
- Fifth Audubon Naturalist class graduates
- Launched new interactive website, including calendar of all events, programs, and field trips
- ASGD joins Instagram, increases presence on Facebook and Twitter