



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

## RMBO finds Yellow-billed Cuckoos in western Colorado

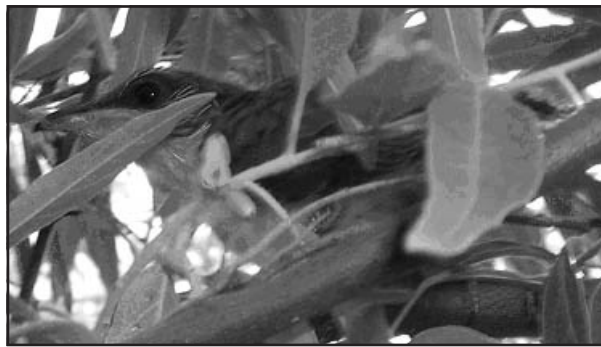
*Story and photo by Jason Beason, Special Monitoring Projects Coordinator*

This summer field workers from Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) for the first time in a decade confirmed nesting in western Colorado by the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. The birds found by the RMBO researchers are believed to represent the western race of this species which has been extirpated in part of its range and is declining throughout the region.

### History

Riparian areas are very important to biological diversity. This is especially true in the arid western United States. Many bird species that depend on riparian habitat for survival are, unfortunately, experiencing population declines. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo, which inhabits riparian areas with extensive cottonwood galleries and well-developed understory vegetation, is found on virtually every western state's species of concern list.

Yellow-billed Cuckoos have declined precipitously throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the western U.S. In fact, cuckoos were extirpated from British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington between 1920's and 1950's. In California, where the species has been well-studied, there once existed an estimated 15,000 pairs and today the population in that state is estimated at 100 pairs.



Recently fledged Yellow-billed Cuckoo near Hotchkiss, Colorado on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008.

### Western Colorado

In western Colorado, Yellow-billed Cuckoos have never been considered common; however, they were reported regularly in the Delta area along the Gunnison and Uncompahgre Rivers as recently as the early 1980s. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s cuckoos nested annually in agricultural areas near Palisade, just west of Grand Junction. Then, during the first Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas (1987 to 1994), only three cuckoos were found in all of western Colorado.

In the summer of 1998, Coen Dexter, who has studied this species longer than anyone in western Colorado, floated over 200 miles of rivers in western Colorado and located no cuckoos (one incidental sighting was recorded that summer near Grand Junction). It seemed that the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo was drifting towards extirpation in Colorado.

### RMBO survey efforts

From 2003 through 2007, reports of this rare west slope species kept surfacing from a handful of locations in the North Fork of the Gunnison River (North Fork) valley during the breeding season. These observations suggested that there may be a population of cuckoos in the North Fork valley which includes the towns of Hotchkiss and Paonia. We decided enough evidence existed that it was time to conduct formal surveys.

RMBO's Science Division, under the Special Species Program, took the lead on developing and conducting surveys for Yellow-billed Cuckoos. We wrote and received grants from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), and the Bureau of Land Management to measure the extent of this population and search for evidence of breeding. We partnered with the USFWS, CDOW and the Bureau of Land Management and enlisted twelve volunteers and two interns to assist in this effort.

### Results

RMBO surveyed 27 locations and was able to confirm breeding along the North Fork of the Gunnison River. Cuckoos were documented during the breeding season at six locations near Hotchkiss and one location near Paonia.

*Continued on page 3*



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## From the Director..

*Tammy VerCauteren, Interim Executive Director*

Fall is upon us and the majority of RMBO's seasonal staff has returned to school with a brave few tackling fall migration surveys in the panhandle of Nebraska. It is hard to see the days get shorter and the nights cooler, but we all enjoy the flurry of activity at our bird feeders as our migrant birds prepare and fuel up to head south for the winter.

Fall is also a time to celebrate harvest and the food that will end up on our tables and accent our homes and festivities. For birders and friends that share a green gardening thumb, we are actively picking our produce and crossing our fingers that the first freeze comes late this year.

As RMBO prepares for fall, we are looking forward to our rescheduled date for the annual picnic - October 18th. October is typically a pleasant month and allows us to capture late migrants at our banding station as well as those that plan to call Barr Lake home for the winter. We hope you will join us for this celebration. (You'll find details elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Staff are entering and analyzing data and in this process it is apparent what a strong contribution we have made this summer regarding species of conservation concern in Colorado and Nebraska and their distribution and abundance information. We confirmed Yellow-billed Cuckoos are nesting on the West Slope as reported by Jason Beason in this issue of *Primary Source*. We also were pleasantly surprised to discover Northern Saw-whet Owls and Common Poorwills nesting throughout the panhandle of Nebraska (see Bart Bly's article).

We are also getting ready to launch our first RMBO Conservation Birding Tour to West Mexico. The tour promises to provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience the diversity of life zones supported by western Mexico. More than 500 species of birds including 90 endemics and many North American migrants call this region home for at least part of the year. International Program Coordinator Arvind Panjabi's article in this issue provides details.

As we are preparing to close 2008 new opportunities for RMBO continue to develop. RMBO board and staff have determined that RMBO has an identity issue, and communications and outreach are critical. To advance RMBO's identity and better brand us as "Birds R Us", we are working with Colorado State University seniors as a part of their Public Relations class to help broaden our identity with the general public and open new doors and opportunities with donors, members, and foundations.

We are also partnering with the National Association for Interpretation to host an interpretative course at our headquarters, The Old Stone House at Barr Lake. Folks who attend the course will develop plans to make the Stone House into an educational center that marries the natural and agricultural heritage of Brighton and Adams County. The weeklong course will culminate with teams presenting their plans for the Stone House creating a working model for the board and staff to put into action. For more information: [http://www.interpnet.com/certification/workshops/CIP\\_BrightonCO\\_Jun09.shtml](http://www.interpnet.com/certification/workshops/CIP_BrightonCO_Jun09.shtml)

As RMBO is winding down its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year celebration, we want to take the time to thank you for your investment and continued support. We also want to charge you with raising the stakes you have invested in us. This can include upping your membership level, making a donation, volunteering, or telling a friend about us and bringing them to our picnic on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Your contributions help RMBO direct our conservation efforts and help us continue to conserve birds and their habitats.

# RMBO 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Picnic Rescheduled

Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory has rescheduled its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary picnic for **Saturday, October 18, 2008 at the Old Stone House at Barr Lake State Park, Brighton.**

Popular speaker and American Birding Association (ABA) editor Ted Floyd will be the keynote speaker. He will speak on "Frontiers in Field Ornithology."

The event also features:

- **Morning bird walks**
- **Visits to RMBO's bird banding station**
- **Birding workshops**
- **Children's activities**
- **A silent auction**

Cost is \$10 RMBO members, \$12 non-members, children ages 17 and under free.

RMBO's banding station will be open from 7 to 9:30 in the morning and field trips led by RMBO birding experts will leave from the Stone House between 7 and 9 a.m.



Concurrent workshop sessions will begin at 10 and 11 a.m. Susie Mottashed, author of *Who Lives in Your Backyard? Creating a journal that opens your eyes and heart to nearby wonders*, will be presenting a workshop on field sketching birds. RMBO biologists Arvind Panjabi and Jason Beason will speak on "The Mexican Connection," and the "Yellow-billed Cuckoo" respectively; Mike Carter, RMBO's founder will talk about the beginnings of the organization and the restoration of the Old Stone House, and Lynn Wickersham, coordinator of the project, will discuss the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas II.

Please RSVP by October 15 to Jim Pauley Call (303) 659-4348, ext. 14. Also, check the RMBO web site [www.rmbo.org](http://www.rmbo.org) for further information.

## Northern Saw-whet Owl banding trip up for bid at Silent Auction!

This will be a great opportunity for those of you interested in owls to learn more about their ecology and possibly see one in-the-hand. RMBO biologist Jason Beason and White River National Forest biologist Kim Potter will set up mist-nets and attempt to capture and band Northern Saw-whet Owls at a site near Rifle, Colorado on the evening of Thursday, October 23, 2008. We guarantee a campfire and good stories!

## Yellow-billed Cuckoo, from page 1

The highlight of our surveys this summer occurred during our nest-searching efforts on July 21<sup>st</sup> when we located a nest with two nestlings.

RMBO also led a broader effort to survey for cuckoos during the breeding season throughout western Colorado including the Colorado, Dolores, Gunnison, San Miguel, Uncompahgre, and Yampa River valleys. These surveys yielded cuckoos at two new locations along the Yampa River in Moffat County and at a historical location near Nucla in Montrose County. In total, cuckoos were reported at eleven of 80 locations.

Our success in finding cuckoos in western Colorado this summer raises several questions including:

1) What is the west slope population size of Yellow-billed Cuckoos?

2) What is the breeding population for the North Fork Valley?

Next summer, RMBO would like to conduct comprehensive surveys in west slope riparian areas including the North Fork of the Gunnison to better quantify the Yellow-billed Cuckoo breeding population. This information is critical to partners including the CDOW who has listed the Yellow-billed Cuckoo as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in their Wildlife Action Plan. Results from our efforts will help guide them in future management and monitoring efforts regarding this species and riparian habitat. Results will also help direct RMBO in future monitoring and outreach efforts.

### Yellow-billed Cuckoo Field Team

Jason Beason's field team for the Yellow-billed Cuckoo survey included

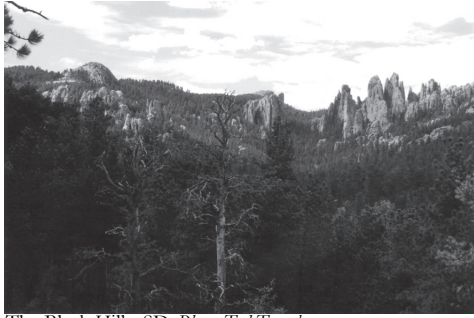
Jacob Cooper and Bill Day. Volunteers on the project were Larry Arnold, Jennifer Blakesley, Bob Bradley, Cheryl Day, Coen Dexter, Nic Korte, Tom Litteral, Forrest Luke, Andrea Robinsong, Brenda Wright, and Dave Wright.

## Membership Note for 2009

Starting in 2009, we plan to go digital as our main mechanism for distributing the RMBO newsletter. Please update your email (and other) information with Starr Nicely at [starr.nicely@rmbo.org](mailto:starr.nicely@rmbo.org), or Jill Phillips at [jill.phillips@rmbo.org](mailto:jill.phillips@rmbo.org).

# RMBO Tests New Protocol in Black Hills

By Emily Jerman, Field Intern



The Black Hills, SD. Photo Ted Toombs.

The Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming are referred to as “An island of trees in a sea of grass”, and rightfully so. The pillars of tree covered Precambrian granite disgorge into the sky from the North American Plains, making it a harbor for plant and animal life in the area that is truly worth observing. These pillars are most notably recognized for the well known Mount Rushmore, Devils Tower, and Crazy Horse Memorial. The hills were formed from volcanic uplift millions of years ago, with the core of the dome shaped island reaching 7,424 ft. above sea level.

There is a myriad of North American habitat types in the Black Hills such as mixed short-grass prairie at the edge of the peaks, quaking aspen stands, spruce forests, and Ponderosa pine dominated regions on the drier south facing slopes. This is where eastern deciduous trees such as bur oak and American elm reach their western extent, creating a confluence of eastern and western habitats. The Lakota Indians looked at these Hills with a respectful eye due to the beauty and diversity of the area, making the Black Hills a spiritual and geological monument.

My experience as a 2008 seasonal field intern for Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) at Wind Cave National Park was nothing short of the description above. I have never in my 22 years seen comparable magenta and orange sunrises spreading across dew soaked short grass prairie and ponderosa covered hills. There were countless elk herds and pronghorn antelope, and I witnessed a bison being born 300 meters away from me and my dangling-with-field equipment self. The Upland Sandpipers made passes at me

in the grasslands, while Western Tanager and Ovenbirds sang with pride over their new found spring territory in this beautiful island in the prairie.

My time spent in the Black Hills was pure enjoyment. This enjoyment also had a research purpose. We were testing a bird monitoring protocol to provide 13 National Parks units in the Dakotas, Nebraska, and eastern Wyoming with information they need to conserve their bird populations and habitats.

Many current bird-monitoring protocols include distance sampling. This kind of



An recording unit used in the Black Hills. The fur shields the microphone from wind noise.

sampling requires a large number of bird detections to make a useful model of the data collected, making it difficult to understand rare bird populations due to their small individual numbers. This led to a new monitoring protocol, in which

participating parks set out Automated Recording Units (ARUs) provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, for field workers like myself this season. Upon arrival at these ARUs placed along my transects, I would simply blurt “start”, record the birds that I detected for seven minutes as well as their distances on a datasheet, and call out “end” when the time was up. I made a total of 120 audio recordings, visiting four units a day for two months in my assigned transects scattered randomly throughout Wind Cave National Park, a participant of this new protocol.

The audio recordings will be analyzed using Raven, a sound analyzer software developed by Cornell. It will compare the on-the-ground distance sampling recorded by field workers to this new ARU detection technology. Hopefully, with both field workers and audio recordings, an understanding of bird populations through visual and audio detections will create a more precise understanding of the community dynamics and individual bird populations of the 13 National Parks.

RMBO’S mission is conserving birds and their habitats. This protocol is working towards that mission. The collaboration between NGPN and RMBO will produce a better understanding of what is causing trends such as the Burrowing Owl population decline in the Park. It will also help detect unseen, unconfirmed, or rare birds in the area. RMBO will be able to add precision to the bird data field biologists collect. This protocol will also assist with limited budgets and allow more data to be collected, interpreted, and incorporated into management efforts.

## Emily Jerman, Intern



Emily Jerman is a senior at Colorado State University. She is expected to graduate in May, 2009 from the Warner College of Natural Resources

with a degree in Parks and Protected Area Management. She worked for RMBO in the summer of 2008 as a seasonal field intern in the Black Hills of South Dakota at Wind Cave National Park and now supports RMBO in the Fort Collins office.

During her summer internship, she had a chance to work with an experimental project to answer important questions about point count monitoring methods. At some points on her count routes, Audio Recording Units recording singing activity before, during, and after her count periods. By comparing her counts with the recorded data, RMBO analysts will try to answer several questions: 1. How do birds respond to the observer being present (i.e. do they stop singing as the observer approaches)? 2. When do singing males arrive? 3. Are any species missed by the observer or the ARU? (The observer can obviously see individuals and hear individuals further than the ARU.) 4. How do singing rates change over the duration of a count day.

This article is her personal account of her summer experience on the project.

# West Mexico Conservation Bird Tour Scheduled

By Arvind Panjabi, International Program Director



Cloud Forest, Jalisco

This winter, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory will offer its first RMBO Conservation Birding Tours trip to two West Mexico biosphere reserves. The trip to this neotropical biodiversity hotspot is scheduled for March 7-14, 2009.

Join Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory and the Manantlán Institute of Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation in Jalisco, Mexico, and discover the extraordinary abundance and diversity of endemic and migrant birds in this globally-important biodiversity hotspot! Over 520 bird species can be found in southern Jalisco and adjacent Colima -- including the majority of wintering migrants from western North America, and an astonishing 91

endemic and near-endemic species! All this in an area *less than 1/8 the size of Colorado!*

RMBO Conservation Birding Tours combine world class bird-watching with science-based education to showcase the biodiversity of continentally-important bird areas and support local conservation programs. These tours are geared for serious nature enthusiasts and bird-watchers who enjoy getting off the beaten path, becoming better informed about biodiversity conservation, experiencing local culture, seeing lots of amazing birds – *and making a difference!* Trips are led by regional and international bird conservation experts with local knowledge and access to key birding areas.

On this trip, we'll explore the Sierra de Manantlán and Chamela-Cuitzmala biosphere reserves, two of Mexico's most important protected areas, and stay overnight at research stations in these reserves' core zones – *areas that are closed to the public.* We'll also visit other sites to experience the full diversity of birds and habitats native to the region.



Aztec Thrush

Some of the unique birds we will seek out include Long-tailed Wood-Partridge, Singing Quail, Lilac-crowned and Yellow-headed Parrot, Military Macaw, Mexican Parrotlet, Colima Pygmy-Owl, Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird, Mexican Woodnymph, Bumblebee Hummingbird, Flammulated Flycatcher, Slaty Dwarf, and Golden vireos, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, Aztec Thrush, Red-breasted Chat, Red Warblers, Orange-breasted Buntings and many more!



White-throated Magpie-Jay

Cost for this 7-night, *all-inclusive* trip is \$2000 per person (excl. airfare to Guadalajara, Jalisco). The trip is *limited to 8 participants*, and will include at least two guides at all times. For more information, including a complete bird list, tentative itinerary, how to reserve your spot, and more, visit [www.rmbo.org](http://www.rmbo.org). Proceeds of the trip will support bird conservation in West Mexico.

Bird photos, Ken Rosenberg

Habitat photo, Arvind Panjabi

## RMBO to Add Private Lands Wildlife Biologists

By Seth Gallagher, Interim Stewardship Division Director

In July, RMBO's Stewardship Division received the exciting news that it was awarded a 5-year contract from the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to place four Private Lands Wildlife Biologists throughout the state.

The Private Lands Wildlife Biologist Program (PLWB) places wildlife biologists into NRCS offices around the state to provide technical resources to landowners who want to incorporate wildlife conservation efforts into their private operations. Under the new agreement, this successful program will continue to use CDOW and NRCS expertise and resources but will gain additional strength by incorporating RMBO's 10-years of experience in private land conservation.

The addition of four biologists represents a major growth phase for RMBO's Stewardship Division and an opportunity

to expand habitat conservation efforts to the western half of the state. For the past 10 years, the Stewardship Division's Prairie Partners program has addressed the decline of grassland bird species by enrolling more than 80,000 acres of shortgrass prairie and associated habitats in eastern Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, and South Dakota into conservation and habitat enhancement programs.

We have reached thousands of landowners and resource professionals through workshops, meetings, and one-on-one conversations to engage them in stewardship efforts for species of conservation concern. The success of this program has served as a model for how to achieve wildlife conservation on private land. With the additional staff and Farm Bill funding in place, the Stewardship Division now has the tools to develop habitat enhancement projects

throughout the state, benefitting not only grassland birds, but also species dependent on sagebrush, mountain shrub, and other habitat types.

The new RMBO biologists will be based out of Greeley, Pueblo, Durango, and Steamboat Springs and will have responsibility for implementing habitat conservation and outreach efforts in their respective geographic regions. Two biologists, Noe Marymor (Greeley) and Patty Knupp (Pueblo), were retained from a previous contract and will continue to apply their experience and expertise in Northeast and Southeast Colorado. They have been coordinating and working with RMBO on conservation efforts for years and are a huge addition to the team. The Durango and Steamboat Springs positions will be filled in upcoming months. RMBO welcomes these new biologists and is excited about the opportunities that lay ahead.

# Nighttime Surveys in Nebraska Panhandle Yield Interesting Results

Bart Bly, Nebraska Prairie Partners Coordinator



Chadron State Park, NE. Photo Travis Wooten

During the early spring months of 2008, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) employees, in cooperation with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) through Nebraska Prairie Partners, conducted nighttime surveys for Northern Saw-whet Owls and Common Poorwills in the pine forests and rocky escarpments of western Nebraska. Nocturnal surveys were an adventure to say the least; the terrain looks different at night and your mind tends to wander to what may be following/tracking you. What an awesome experience to have close encounters with owls and poorwills, as well as the diversity of wildlife supported in western Nebraska.

While it was previously believed that a few pair of Northern Saw-whet Owls may breed in the western Pine Ridge of Nebraska, and that Common Poorwills were abundant and widespread throughout the panhandle, data supporting these claims were limited at best. Therefore, RMBO designed and implemented a study to survey for these nocturnal species in order to fill knowledge gaps for the state wildlife action plan, the Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan.

In April and early May, RMBO technicians conducted a total of 20 walking/road surveys repeated three times each in the Pine Bluffs area of the southwestern panhandle, Wildcat Hills, and Pine Ridge of western Nebraska. Of these 20 locations, Northern Saw-whet Owls were recorded on 14 of the survey sites, including all sites in the Wildcat Hills and most sites in the Pine Ridge. Of the 14 sites where owls were recorded, four of the surveys in the Pine Ridge yielded multiple saw-whets in the respective areas. Also, during the Common Poorwill surveys, NGPC employees encountered Northern Saw-whet Owls in the Loess Canyons of southwestern

Nebraska. Results from this study suggest that instead of Northern Saw-whet Owls being rare and limited to a small portion of northwestern Nebraska, they are more common and widespread and thus should be considered and incorporated into management and monitoring efforts.

In late May and early June, RMBO and NGPC technicians conducted over 50 survey transects for Common Poorwills throughout the panhandle and southwestern Nebraska, beginning at sunset and going through sunrise when poorwills are active. Poorwills were encountered on most transects, and did not appear to be limited to any specific portions of the study area. While they appeared to be most abundant and commonly encountered in areas with both rocky escarpments and coniferous trees, they were also located on rocky, broken terrain without trees. As a result of this RMBO study, there is now quantitative support in western Nebraska for the conservation status of Common Poorwills in the Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan.

As a result of this cooperative study we anticipate helping with a state-wide protocol for nightjars. We also anticipate wildlife biologists in the panhandle incorporating our results into their management prescriptions on private and public lands.



Northern Saw-whet owl.  
Photo Nancy Bell

The Nebraska Natural Legacy Plan is the guiding document for NGPC and the results from this survey effort help provide important feedback loops for the guide as well as future conservation efforts the partnership embarks on. RMBO's mission is to conserve birds and their habitats, and abundance, distribution, and habitat information are the foundation to make this happen. Through the Nebraska Prairie Partnership, we have a network in place to help share these results including an upcoming workshop in the Pine Ridge for landowners and resource professionals.

## Staff Migrations Migrating In...

### Jeff Birek, Biologist

Jeff received his B.S. in Environmental Biology and Management from University of California, Davis (2003). Since 2003, he has worked with raptors, songbirds, and



gamebirds in 4 U.S. states and Mexico. Jeff was the Wyoming crew leader for RMBO in 2007 and conducted point counts in Southern Colorado in 2008. He is currently working on monitoring projects in the Fort Collins office.

### Patty Knupp, Private Lands Biologist



Patty received her B.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in Wildlife Management,

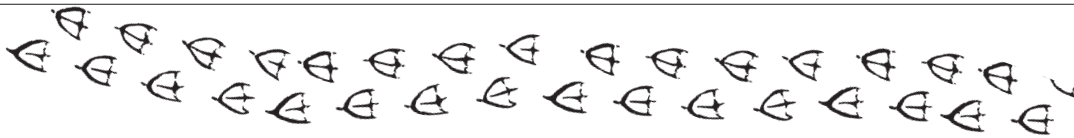
Biology and Natural Resources and an M.S. in Wildlife Management from South Dakota State University. Her thesis included work on wild turkeys and their habitat. Patty worked as a Farm Wildlife Biologist with the VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) for 13 years, with statewide duties working primarily on bobwhite quail and other early succession wildlife on private lands. Patty has been working as a Private Lands Wildlife Biologist in Southeast Colorado with NRCS and CDOW for the past two years. She is stationed in Pueblo NRCS Field Office.

### Greg Levandoski, Biologist, International Program

Greg received a B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of New Hampshire in 1996 and then promptly fell in love with avian field research.



He has worked on a wide variety of research projects ranging from monitoring nesting alcids in the Bering Sea, to counting migrating raptors along western ridgelines and chasing warblers through Caribbean thorn forests. However, most of his work has been in monitoring populations



of passerines in the western U.S. The search for a broad base of experience to understand avian conservation needs has led him to work in 13 U.S. states (8 western), 3 Mexican states, and Jamaica. Currently, Greg is working with the International Program on a broad scale project throughout northern Mexico which

**Ross Lock, Mountain Plover Nest Conservation Project Manager/Wildlife Biologist**

Ross received a B.S. in Zoology and Botany (1964) and a M.S. in Zoology (1966) both from Fort Hays State University. He worked for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as a Wildlife Biologist from 1966 to 2001, serving as a District Supervisor of Wildlife Management Areas for 5 years and as the Nongame and Endangered Species Coordinator for 30 years. Ross was a member of the Whooping Crane and Piping Plover national recovery teams. Ross moved to Colorado in 2001 and began working with RMBO in 2004 as a seasonal field biologist conducting Mountain Plover nest surveys in southeastern Colorado and bird surveys on playa lakes throughout the eastern plains of Colorado. Ross became the Mountain Plover Nest Conservation Project Manager in 2007.



**Noe Marymor, Private Lands Biologist**

Noe received her B.S. in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University in 2005. Since then she has worked as a private lands biologist in both Nebraska and Colorado, helping landowners develop and implement habitat conservation projects on their land. Noe joined RMBO in September 2008 as a Private Lands Wildlife Biologist and works with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Colorado Division of Wildlife to deliver habitat conservation projects through Farm Bill funding sources in Northeast Colorado. Noe is based out of the Regional NRCS office in Greeley.



**Kristie Parker, Interim Education Coordinator**

Kristie is a 2003 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a degree in Biology and a concentration in wildlife. She researched Chronic Wasting Disease in White-Tailed Deer populations for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources before moving to Colorado to study Mountain Plover populations for the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Kristie worked for the City of Fort Collins where she managed a crew of 10 seasonal employees responsible for habitat improvement on over 33,000 acres of municipal open space. She joined RMBO in March 2008 and is currently the interim Education Coordinator until March of 2009 at which point she will enjoy spending time with her newborn.



**James Pauley, CPA; Accounting Manager**

James earned his BS and MS in Accounting from the University of Wyoming in 2002 and 2003 respectively. After finishing his education, he worked for two years in Public Accounting in Lubbock, Texas, passed the Uniform CPA exam, and became a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). After moving to Colorado, James worked for two years as Reimbursement Analyst for The University of Colorado Hospital. James began working for RMBO in September 2007.



**David Pavlacky, Spatial Ecologist**

A Colorado native, David received a BS in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University (1995) and a MS in Zoology and Physiology from The University of Wyoming (2000). He accepted an international



scholarship to study Wildlife Ecology in Australia and is currently finishing his PhD from the The University of Queensland. David first worked for RMBO 1995 as a field technician and continued to work on the landscape ecology of birds in juniper woodlands and subtropical rainforests. David joined RMBO in April 2008 and is working on the spatial ecology of playa wetlands in eastern Colorado.

**Chris White, Biologist**

Chris received a B.S. in Biology from Arizona State University in 2002. After graduating, he volunteered at Liberty Wildlife, an avian rehabilitation facility in Arizona, and worked occasional field jobs. After moving to Fort Collins, Colorado, he took a job working for RMBO as a data entry technician in the fall of 2006. He currently works in the Monitoring Division planning and conducting field work.



**Staff Migrating Out**

**Amanda Morrison, Education Coordinator**

Amanda came to RMBO as Assistant Education Director coordinating and teaching the Denver metro area programs and the Birds Beyond Borders program. In 2005 she created the Summer Bird Camp and directed it until 2008. She co-organized public outreach events such as the Kite & Flight Festival, International Migratory Bird Day, and the Fall Bird Festival, and was involved in the recently-created Bird Education Network speaking on the panel at the first national conference. As Education Coordinator, she worked closely with volunteers, educators, field staff, and partners to facilitate all of RMBO's Colorado education programs. Her plans are to finish a Master's of Education degree at Colorado State University and continue to teach about wildlife.



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