

**Junkyard Dogs**

By Craig Johnson (Penguin Group) \$14

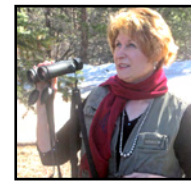
When the owners of a multimillion-dollar development of ranchettes in Durant, Wyo., want to get rid of the adjacent junkyard, they come up against the notorious Stewart

clan. Sheriff Longmire soon finds himself in the throes of a modern-day range war featuring more than just the usual corpses, including an outlaw whose young wife likes to tie her grandfather-in-law to the back of a 1968 Oldsmobile Toronado. A hilarious and gripping story, this is Johnson's sixth book in the popular Walt Longmire

mystery series.

Whether you are planning a trip to Europe, to the mountains, or to the beach this summer, or simply relaxing on the back deck, a good mystery is a great way to pass the time and enjoy a brief escape from everyday life.

Until next month, happy reading. ■

**Bird Watch on the Palmer Divide****Colorado Birding Trail**

By Elizabeth Hacker

Summer is a great time to take off and drive our many highways to visit a park or get together with family and friends. Now that more than 20 states have developed birding trails, we like to plan our vacations to incorporate one or more of them. It can break up the monotony of a long trip and is a way to see interesting sites that we might otherwise unknowingly drive by.

The economy and high gas prices are reasons many people are staying close to home this summer. The good news is that Colorado has developed a birding trail that extends from the tall peaks in western Colorado to the eastern grasslands. Most stops are easily accessible and near a major highway. The website provides good descriptions for each site with an explanation of what can be found there. Every year we try to visit a section of the Colorado Birding Trail as well as a new birding trail in another state. We have not been disappointed, although the quality of sites varies from state to state.

Of all the birding trails we've visited, our favorite remains the Pikes Peak section of the Colorado Birding Trail. It features 27 sites, but because of the Waldo Canyon fire, a few destinations are currently closed. Wildfires have a devastating effect on people and wildlife. Already I am receiving reports of cross-bills and other unusual birds that have been seen in the Monument area due to the Waldo Canyon fire. When a bird is nesting in a fire area, if it is to survive, it must abandon its nest and expand its range, often leaving behind helpless nestlings.

Most of the sites on the Pikes Peak Trail are 5 to 60 miles from Monument and are easy day trips. Many stops are along I-25 from the Air Force Academy on the north end to Chico Basin Ranch on the south. The trail also includes a section from Colorado Springs west along U.S. Highway 24 to Lake George. Many birds that move away from the fire zones may be relocating to other trail sites, so it may be a good time to revisit some of them.

The Pikes Peak region is quintessential Colorado. The altitude ranges from about 5,500 feet to more than 14,000 feet and offers spectacular views and a chance to explore a diverse landscape that is home to more than 400 birds. No other place offers so much variety in such close proximity. The seven types of habitat zones include an upland short grass prairie, three distinct mountainous

zones, high meadows, arid scrubland, and the tundra on the upper slopes of Pikes Peak.

Many birds have specific habitat requirements and can only be found in a narrow range. One example is the juniper titmouse that is found at the Aiken Canyon Nature Conservancy, a stop on the Pikes Peak section of the Colorado Birding Trail. Along the trail it is possible to find many more unusual birds, and most of them are listed on the trail's website.

It was Pikes Peak that inspired a young English professor from Wesley College to write the words of *America the Beautiful*. Just as Katherine Lee Bates arrived in Colorado Springs after traveling across the country in 1898, many tourists drive here with the intention of going to the top of Pikes Peak. Those who live here know that this region offers much more than a magnificent view. The designated sites along the Pikes Peak Birding Trail provide tourists and residents with a true look at the diversity of landscapes, cultural heritage, plants, birds, and animals of this region.

According to a 2006 study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 48.7 million people engaged in some form of bird watching, making it the most popular sport or hobby in America. The study estimated that birding is increasing in popularity by 10 percent per year and that in 2006, Americans spent \$45 million dollars feeding, observing, and photographing birds.

Birders do not need expensive equipment to enjoy birding, but equipment is available in all price ranges and can be quite pricey. I'm often humbled when I find myself next to a birder with high-end equipment, but it doesn't matter because while they may get a clearer look, I will find as many birds.

Many birders have money and spend it visiting places where they might find a bird they haven't seen and can add to their list. Often I meet birders from other states who come here to find a particular bird. Changing climatic conditions may influence a bird's range so birders watch the weather and other conditions in anticipation of where the birds might be found.

Attracting birders to an area requires little infrastructure, and small towns across America are looking at ways to cash in on its popularity. Every year more states develop birding trails and small communities host birding



**Above:** Northern Harrier is one of many hawk species found at Spruce Mountain. Photo by Emilio D'Alise <http://ejdalise.smugmug.com>. A color version is posted at [www.ocn.me/v12n7bird.htm](http://www.ocn.me/v12n7bird.htm).

festivals to attract tourists and the dollars they bring.

It's not difficult to develop a birding trail because most of the sites already exist and many states provide grants to develop facilities that will enhance the experience, which might include trails, signage, parking, maps, and toilets.

As I previously mentioned, I've birded the Pikes Peak Trail but truthfully, I believe there are some equally outstanding places to bird on the Palmer Divide that could be great additions to the Colorado Trail. A few sites that come to mind include the Santa Fe Trail, Mount Herman Preserve, the trail to the Palmer Lake reservoirs, Greenland Mountain Open Space Trail, Castle Rock Canyon State Park, and Spruce Mountain. There are probably many more sites and there may even be enough of them to develop a Palmer Divide segment of the Colorado Birding Trail.

Directions to the Pikes Peak Birding Trail with detailed site maps and descriptions can be found at [www.coloradobirdingtrail.com](http://www.coloradobirdingtrail.com). Birding trails in other states can be located by Googling "birding trails."

Elizabeth Hacker is a writer and artist. Email her at [elizabethhacker@ocn.me](mailto:elizabethhacker@ocn.me) to share bird pictures and stories.

**Art Matters****Putting imagination to materials**

By Janet Sellers

I first met CarrieAnn Baade in the mid-1990s when she put together an art show at the Estemere Mansion grounds for professional artists, and she thoughtfully included local child artists in the show as well. We still have photos of that special time, when the carriage house and servants' buildings were transformed into a splendid and festive exhibition complete with a snowy evening for the artists' reception.

It was standing-room-only for the entire exhibit, and I especially remember a beautiful figurative painting freshly done in oil, exquisitely painted by her in a

traditional manner with youthful beauty and exuberance. She told me the painting was still wet to the touch as she carefully hung this work high on the wall in the salon tradition.

Baade will be featured in a solo exhibition in the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) Lucy Owens Gallery July 3 through 28. Baade relates her process to create her unique imagery: "To begin a composition, I start with scissors, clipping fragments, composing from snippets of several hundred pictures scattered about me on the floor. A prototype collage of layered scraps with cut edges is created that includes an array of photographs and images from art history. Looking at the resulting collage, a painting is then executed in a trompe l'oeil manner showing the multiple layers ...." Baade says that for her this layering suggests a person's "masks and their hidden secrets."

This retrospective exhibition of works by Baade features prints of her work she has made available to raise money for the Ranger Legacy Fund. The fund was developed by alumni and graduates of the Lewis-Palmer High School class of 1992.

Baade grew up in the Tri-Lakes area and graduated

Lewis-Palmer High School in 1992.

The artist currently lives and works in Tallahassee where she is an assistant professor of painting and drawing at Florida State University.

There will be some additional public events connected to the exhibition: An artist lecture, Thursday, **July 19**, 7 to 8 p.m., will focus on artists' evolution of ideas and process. Held in conjunction with Baade's High School Reunion, the reception with the artist and a fundraiser for a 20 x 20 will be on Friday, **July 20**, 5 to 8 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar and live music will round out the gala event at the TLCA, 304 Highway 105 in Palmer Lake.

**July 13: Monument Art Walk**

As you know, our local artists, studios and art galleries have a fun night out planned for you every second Friday of the month. July brings us to these mid-summer night dreams on **July 13**, from 4 to 9 p.m. throughout our Tri Lakes area—right now historic Monument and Palmer Lake—and remember to walk along the Artist's Alley west of Wisdom Tea House. Sculpture Bliss Studio is there, and if we're lucky, owner Jodie Bliss may just be heating up those irons for a blacksmithing demo.

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