



Above: Illustration by Elizabeth Hacker of a double-crested cormorant. A color version is posted at www.ocn.me/v13n4bird.htm.

and more dense. The added weight reduces the bird's buoyancy, allowing it to dive to depths of 10 feet or more. Dives can last more than a minute.

Its strong black webbed feet and legs propel the cormorant under water and help it to chase its prey. It grasps a fish by clamping it tightly between its hooked beak. It then swims to the surface where it tosses the fish in the air and swallows it whole. Fish must be swallowed head first to prevent the fish's tail and scales from being caught in the bird's throat and choking it.

Diet

A cormorant's preferred diet is fish, but it is an opportu-

nistic bird that also consumes amphibians, crustaceans, snakes, and insects.

Breeding and nesting

At age 3, the double-crested cormorant is fully mature, its feathers are black, its beak is dark, and it has the characteristic tufts of feathers above its eyes. It is ready to mate.

Cormorants are gregarious birds that gather in large nesting colonies, often alongside other wading birds including herons and egrets. Nests are built in a variety of locations such as trees, on the ground on islands, and on the edges of rock cliffs. The male chooses a nesting site to attract a female. If a female likes the site and accepts the male, a pair bond is formed. The male brings the female nesting materials, and she builds a large platform nest made from flotsam, sticks, seaweed, and any other object he brings to her. As the breeding season progresses, the nest becomes like cement from the accumulation of guano.

The female lays an average of three blue eggs. Both parents take turns incubating the eggs. The eggs hatch in about four weeks, and the parents take turns feeding and protecting the helpless altricial chicks. Parents use their wings to shade the chicks from the hot sun until they develop feathers and are strong enough to venture from the nest.

At about three weeks, the chicks have feathers and venture from the nest to roam the colony with other chicks in groups called crèches. At night they return to their nest and continue to be fed by their parents. At 10 weeks, the juveniles are fully grown, leave the nest, and

are on their own.

Folklore and other interesting facts

I've always thought cormorants looked ominous. It surprised me to learn that the cormorant is found in Greek mythology and that many cultures consider the cormorant to be a symbol of nobility. Fishermen often carried cormorant amulets, or good luck charms, to attract fish to their nets.

Unlike other waterfowl, the cormorant doesn't have well-developed oil glands. To protect its feathers and dry its wings, it stands on a rock or tree limb and spread its wings. This posture was depicted in early Christian religious iconography to symbolize Christ's sacrifice and human salvation.

In China and Japan, humans once exploited the fishing skills of the cormorant by tying a snare to its throat and sending it to sea. The snare allowed the cormorant to swallow only small fish, allowing the fisherman to take the larger fish from the cormorant.

Pine Forest Antique and Garden Show

This year I was honored to be invited by the Tri-Lakes Women's Club to have a booth at the Pine Forest Antique and Garden Show. The show will be held at Lewis-Palmer High School on April 20 and 21. Many of my illustrations will be up for sale, and I will be available to discuss birds and demonstrate the techniques I use to illustrate birds. I hope to see you there!

Elizabeth Hacker is a writer and artist. Email her at elizabethhacker@ocn.me to share bird pictures and stories.

Art Matters

Art for peace: Kilim weavings that save lives



By Janet Sellers

Monument's own Max Hatfield has, with Friendship International, created a kilim tapestry workshop in eastern Turkey where Kurdish girls are trained to weave traditional kilims. Kilims are a form of textile art, historically created as tribal weavings. They are flat tapestries that are used as rugs or wall art, and have become extremely popular decor in the West in recent years. Kilims have a long history, with some dating as far back as the fourth or fifth century A.D.

For over 20 years, Friendship International has worked with and offered friendship to the Kurdish community in eastern Turkey. Due to a lack of education and skills, the girls in this culture are of particular concern to Friendship International because they become prime targets for recruitment by terrorist groups. Friendship International looks to change that scenario with the skills, training, and sales of the kilims at their workshop for the girls.

Proceeds are used to pay for health care and literacy education and to give the girls the possibility of looking beyond their current circumstances. This project has prevented many girls from being recruited by terrorist groups by allowing them to instead dream of higher education and, as educated mothers, pass on the values of tolerance and reason to their children.

Because of the way kilims are intricately woven, they feature a traditional, sharp-etched design that highlights the geometric forms. They are beloved by collectors. Due to the relative delicacy of the kilim weave as compared to a pile weave (which also blurs the design) there are very few kilims over 100 or so years old left in the world.

Friendship International will exhibit and sell kilims at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) April 2 to 15. The exhibit will include hand-woven rugs, some of which are 80 years old or more, that have been purchased from Kurdish families. These purchases make a difference in a young girl's life and help to support peacemakers in the Middle East. I hope you will join me and take in this extraordinary show, and perhaps you will be the lucky

patron who buys a kilim and helps a Kurdish girl live to see her dreams grow.

April art events

The Art Walk will begin at 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, **April 12**. The downtown Monument arts district offers an Art Night every month, and a little birdie told me they may be increased up to weekly—so every weekend can be fun again! Usually, the arts district galleries hold their new show receptions to coincide with the Friday Art Night. From Palmer Lake to Baptist Road, the area's local arts venues are looking to have our whole community get out and enjoy the art and evenings.

It's like an open house of sorts, with refreshments and the gallery owners and artists on hand to talk with and enjoy stories about the art and how things get made in the creative realm of our local arts district.

Bella Art and Frame will feature its new April art exhibit, *Just Hors'n Around* by artists Dolly Rickerman and Robert Templin, with the artists' reception from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, **April 12**. The show runs April 3 to 27.

Black Faced Sheep gallery offers its ongoing exhibit of handcrafted woodworks, notably small, hand-carved wood sculptures for tabletop clusters and walls. The gallery also has home decor items, candles, and heirloom "keepers" for gifts with a rustic, country feel. 16152 Jackson Creek Parkway, No. 120, Monument in the Walmart area.

Southwinds Fine Arts Gallery will kick off the spring/summer art season with the Friday Art Night and

will have an exhibit tent at Bella Art and Frame. On **May 3**, Southwinds Fine Arts will hold a grand reopening of the gallery with a ribbon cutting from 4 to 6 p.m. Leo Huff will be introduced as the director of the gallery.

The annual Southwinds Fine Arts Gallery spring show for member artists will be held from 1 to 6 p.m. **May 4 and 5**. A ribbon cutting is set for **May 3** to kick off the show, and everyone is invited to attend the festivities all weekend. The gallery offers work by owner J. Clark Wider and has a broad range of member artists' works in ongoing exhibits throughout the spacious grounds and gallery. The gallery is also open by appointment. It is located at 16575 Roller Coaster Rd, Colorado Springs. Phone: (719) 481-6157.

TLCA will feature the Pikes Peak Pastel Society, which will present *Springtime in the Rockies*, an exhibit of paintings. This juried exhibit will run from **April 2 to 13**. The opening reception will be held at 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, **April 5**. TLCA is located at 304 Highway 105, Palmer Lake.

Wisdom Tea House will feature artist Kris Lane, who is new to the Wisdom Tea House exhibits. The show runs for the month of April. Wisdom Tea House is located at 65 Second St., Monument. Phone: (719) 481-8822.

Janet Sellers is an American artist, art teacher and writer. She makes public art, puts brush to paint every day, and has a new blogtalkradio online radio show for the best in art, food, and fitness. She lives in Woodmoor, Colo., and can be reached at janetsellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community



Palmer Lake Easter Egg Hunt, Mar. 30

Left: The Palmer Lake Easter Egg Hunt March 30 thrilled kids and adults with a mad dash to gather colorful eggs left by the Easter bunny. Outdoors, eggs were gathered up in a flash all over the lawn at the Town Hall Green, while indoors there were egg-themed games, face painting, complimentary pastries, and a very fluffy 6-foot "live" Easter bunny that sat or stood with families for photos. (Continued on page 28.)

Photo by Janet Sellers.

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