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1999 SPRING COMPENDIUM OF WILDLIFE APPRECIATION



# Colorado's Wildlife Company



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# 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE !!!

**LOOK BACK**  
on a  
decade of  
Colorado  
wildlife!

# Colorado's Wildlife Company Turns 10

By Mary Taylor Young

Ever wondered how well a bat hears, an owl sees or a bear can smell? Considered the importance of mice to the ecosystem? Wanted a good definition of biodiversity? Wondered about all the fuss over whirling disease? Looked inside a prairie dog burrow? Hoped to start birdwatching or feeding birds in your back yard? Puzzled over how a hummingbird flies backwards? Tried to overcome your fear of snakes? Wanted to learn how to build a bat house? Well, if you've been reading **Colorado's Wildlife Company** for the last 10 years, you know all of these things!

In spring of 1989 **Colorado's Wildlife Company**, a "compendium of wildlife appreciation," debuted with an issue entitled *Peregrine Falcons In Canyons of Downtown Denver* covering the release of captive-reared, endangered falcons in Colorado's largest city. The new publication was born from the Colorado Division of Wildlife's Watchable Wildlife and Nongame and Endangered Wildlife programs. It was different in concept from previous DOW publications and addressed a different audience. The goal at one level, says Watchable Wildlife coordinator Bob Hernbrode, was to make the public aware of the efforts and goals of the two sponsoring programs, but at a broader level to advocate for conservation of all wildlife species, whether hunted, enjoyed by wildlife viewers or never noticed by anyone at all.

In the late 1980s, Hernbrode often brainstormed with nongame program specialists Judy Sheppard and Jim Bennett on ways to let Coloradans know what good things were being accomplished with their contributions to the Nongame Income Tax Checkoff and license fee revenues being applied to wildlife viewing programs. "For us, the first big step in gaining

broader acceptance and support for these programs was to make sure people knew what was going on, and how important these tasks were," Bennett explains.

But a standard program newsletter, with dull stories and pictures of people receiving awards, would not fit the bill. "It was clear we needed to build awareness," says Hernbrode, "but we wanted to educate people while also helping them learn when, where and how to enjoy wildlife in Colorado." They decided on a format offering fun, unusual and entertaining wildlife-oriented articles, creative design and original art. The publication had to appeal to adults while also being accurate and educational enough for students and teachers. "We were sure that we could choose perspectives from which to discuss wildlife and wildlife habitat issues that would both inform and educate," says Bennett.

The name—**Colorado's Wildlife Company**—was meant to subtly suggest that readers were actually "stockholders" in a company. Explains Bennett, "We hoped they would, in a sense, actively participate in the running of the Company by taking an interest in wildlife and conservation." Jan Duvall, CWC's original editor and project manager who devised the "compendium" concept, was "playing around with an early product poster from The Nature Company, when I suddenly realized that **Colorado's Wildlife Company** was the perfect name for the broader image we were creating for DOW."

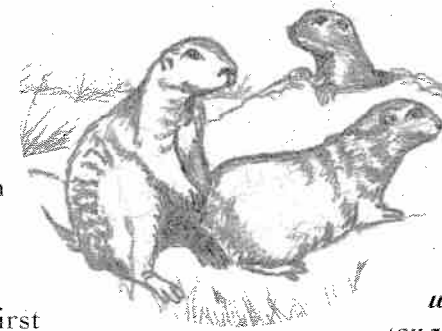
That inaugural issue of CWC went out to a small mailing list of about 3,100 people. "We wanted to reach the people of Colorado who loved to watch wildlife and who simply enjoyed the existence of wildlife in their native habitat," explains Duvall, "the photographers, birders,

conservationists, environmentalists, schoolkids, DOW employees and others who might enjoy a publication addressing the long-term survival of wildlife in Colorado." Every school in the state, about 1,700 of them, also received a copy of the first issue. Over the years the mailing list has grown to 22,000, a diverse mix of fans of wildlife as well as all Colorado teachers who are involved with Project Wild. An additional 3,000 copies of each issue are distributed for special school programs or public presentations. With a distribution of 25,000 copies, the publication reaches an estimated 100,000 readers. Copies of some back issues are still available. Several issues such as *The Prairie Dog Home Companion*, *The Good Guys* (known as the bat issue) and *Bears* have proven so popular they were reprinted.

Covering issues central to Colorado wildlife and its conservation has been an important direction for the Compendium. That first issue ten years ago focused on a project that was a focus of the Nongame Program—the recovery of the endangered peregrine falcon. The lead article—"People of Colorado Rescue Peregrines"—closed with this message:

*Ultimately, the entire peregrine recovery program, both wild and urban, owes its success to support from the people of Colorado. As a project under the Nongame Program, it is funded solely through the state income tax check-off, federal aid, and private donations. Says Sheppard, "Thanks to the Nongame Check-Off and contributions from the public, we're within three years of accomplishing our recovery objective: 51 breeding pairs of peregrine falcons in Colorado."*

As the black-tailed prairie dog is being considered for listing as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1999, it is interesting to note CWC covered the prairie dog ecosystem and the threats to its survival in one of our most popular



issues, the Fall 1990 *Prairie Dog Home Companion*:

*A community of settled prairie dogs is much like a village of hard-working peasants preyed upon by nomadic raiders and beset by squatters... Prairie dogs provide a direct food source for predators, and their activities nurture an entire web of life... Humans have only begun to appreciate the richness and diversity of the biological community fostered by the prairie dog town... The decline of the prairie dog has, in turn impacted animals that depend on the prairie dog for food and shelter.*

**Colorado's Wildlife Company** has covered other important issues such as the devastation of trout populations by whirling disease, management of black bears and a nationwide initiative to pay for wildlife conservation and environmental education through a user fee on outdoors equipment. And natural history of Colorado wildlife has been a mainstay, with topics as diverse as non-native wildlife, snakes, falcons, bats, reptiles and amphibians, owls, predators, Colorado's wild cat species, eagles, creatures of the night, wildlife behavior in springtime and adaptations for heat and cold.

Has this "experiment" succeeded in its original goals? "Yes!" says originator Duvall. "I think it has met and surpassed our goals and hopes. The mere fact that CWC has been published every quarter for 10 years says quite a lot. I still pore over every new issue as soon as I receive it. It still draws in the reader with upbeat writing, an open format and original drawings."

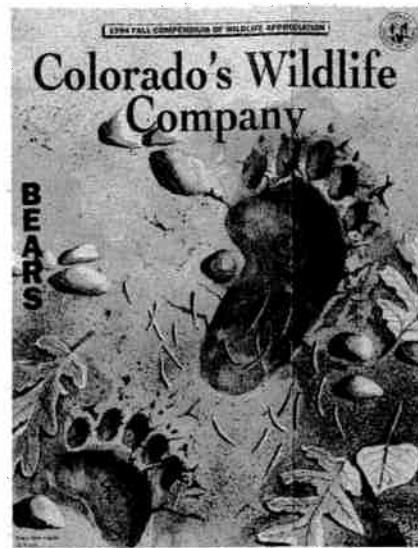
"It's pretty clear to me that people are interested in wildlife but have lost the tools to enjoy it," says Hernbrode. "What CWC has done over the last 10 years is provide exciting glimpses into the wildlife of our state—endangered species, urban wildlife, how to feed birds—and given people skills and opportunities to enjoy wildlife. I've always been very proud of this publication. It's a real highlight of my 10 years working in Watchable Wildlife."



Biodiversity isn't a thing; it's a property or characteristic, one that can be measured. Perhaps a good analogy is the concept of health. Health consists of many components, like good teeth and a sound heart, but also healthy body processes like good circulation and regeneration of cells. All these components and processes are interrelated. Likewise, biodiversity encompasses all life forms, like fungi, ferns and frogs, as well as processes like photosynthesis and fire that tie them together.

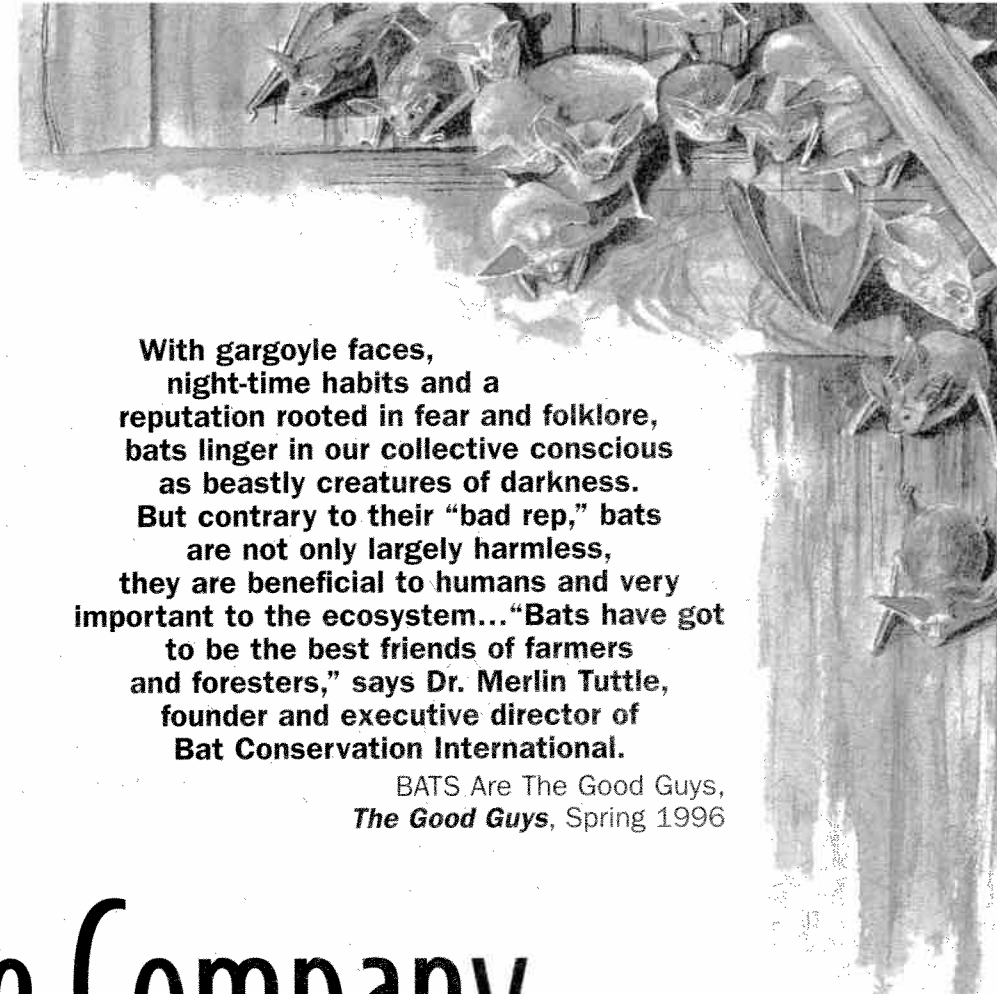
BIO-Life DIVERSITY-Variety,  
*Biodiversity – The Big Picture*, Spring/Summer 1993

# Some Favorites From 10 Years Of Colorado's



People who live in bear country will almost always tell you so. While it is sometimes presented as a warning, it is in reality an effort to describe some ephemeral value of the land. Most people will never see a bear in their mountains, yet the mere possibility of doing so imparts some vital uncertainty, mystery, danger, need for respect and greater depth to the landscape. We need bears in our mountains.

Living With Bears,  
*Bears*, Fall 1994



With gargoyle faces, night-time habits and a reputation rooted in fear and folklore, bats linger in our collective conscious as beastly creatures of darkness. But contrary to their "bad rep," bats are not only largely harmless, they are beneficial to humans and very important to the ecosystem... "Bats have got to be the best friends of farmers and foresters," says Dr. Merlin Tuttle, founder and executive director of Bat Conservation International.

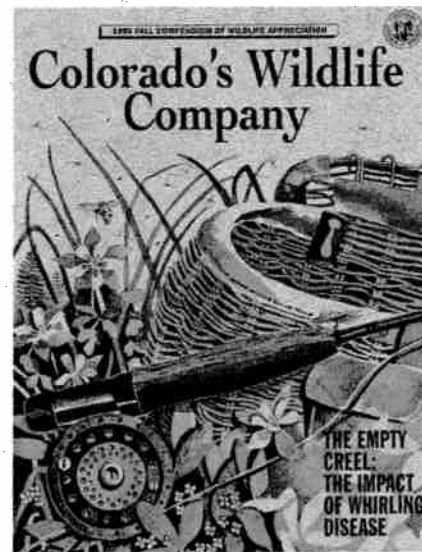
BATS Are The Good Guys,  
*The Good Guys*, Spring 1996

But why should non-anglers who never toss a hook in the water, care about whirling disease?

The answer lies in looking at the broad picture.

Fish are a valuable part of Colorado's wildlife heritage, and essential components of the state's ecosystem. Native wild trout represent Colorado's untamed character every bit as much as bighorn sheep, mountain lions and eagles. A loss of native cutthroat trout... ultimately affects the quality of life of every Coloradan.

Whirling Disease,  
 What's It All About?,  
*The Empty Creel:  
 The Impact Of  
 Whirling Disease*,  
 Fall 1996



JOHN MUMMA, Director,  
 Colorado Division of Wildlife

The one about whirling disease—*The Empty Creel*—particularly caught my eye, since this is such a crucial issue facing wildlife and wildlife recreation in our state. Some others that caught my fancy were *Biodiversity—The Big Picture*, *SENSEsational*, *Plants 'R' Us* and *Urban Wildlife*.

LISA HUTCHINS, Audubon Society  
 of Greater Denver

Colorado's Wildlife Company is always beautiful to look at, and the articles are almost strangely intuitive and quite timely—I will just be thinking about some conservation issue or some type of wildlife, and bam! here comes CWC with an issue on the very thing I was wondering about

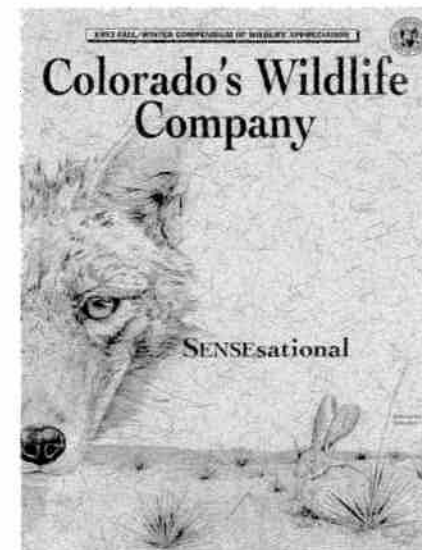
# Wildlife Company

GARY SKIBA, former DOW  
 Biodiversity Specialist

My favorite issue?  
*Biodiversity—The Big Picture*, no surprise. I thought it took a difficult subject and made it accessible to a wide audience.

JIM BENNETT, DOW Assistant Regional Wildlife Manager

My favorite issues were the "fun" ones—*Creatures of the Night*, *Prairie Dog Home Companion*. The cover of *Plants 'R' Us* illustrated a pika and an elk in relative size to each other, and both herbivores...they both made a living on plants!

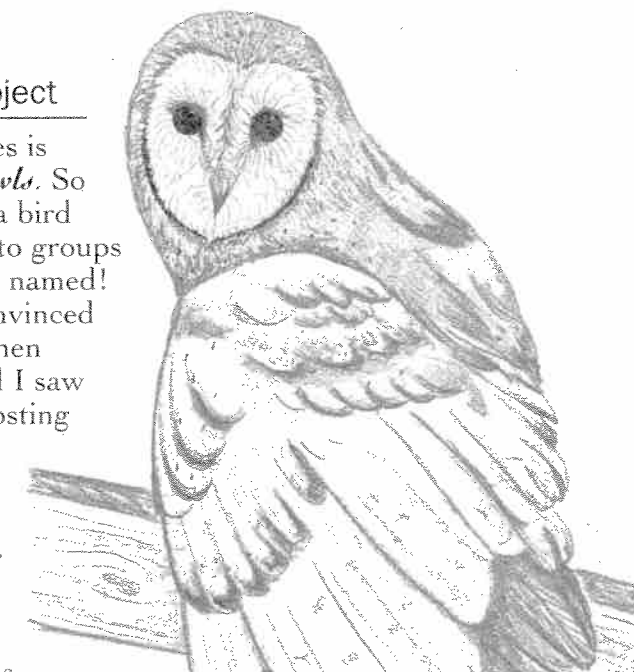


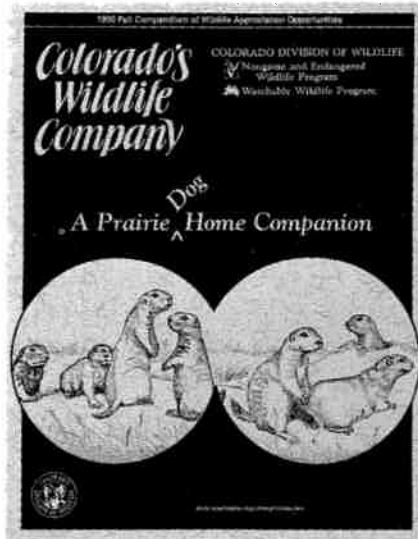
MARY TAYLOR (GRAY) YOUNG,  
 CWC writer and project manager

*SENSEsational* was great for artwork and wonderful puns (my specialty). As a birder I loved *Summer's Hummers* and

SHERRY CHAPMAN,  
 The Bluebird Project

One of my favorites is *A Parliament of Owls*. So quiet and solitary a bird actually gathers into groups large enough to be named! Hmm. I wasn't convinced until years later when a birder friend and I saw a parliament of roosting long-eared owls. "Parliament" seems perfect. They are dignified. They are cool, calm. They are aloof and appear





**Land humans consider worthless—junkyards, abandoned lots, waste dumps, rough areas around industrial sites—is often inhabited by wildlife. Junked cars, broken concrete pipe and abandoned sheds offer holes for mice, nest sites for songbirds, and burrow concealment for skunks. Jackrabbits hide under shrubs on dry, overgrown lots. And show a prairie dog an open field, highway median or untended strip next to a baseball diamond, and he'll move right in with lots of family in tow.**

Wild Neighbors,  
*Urban Wildlife*, Spring 1991

**BOB HERNBRODE**, CWC Big Kahuna

*The Prairie Dog Home Companion* was so catchy; I remember we checked with Garrison Keilor to make sure they didn't have a problem with that takeoff on his program. And the Hummingbird issue was great.

**ART ELSER**,  
reader, Colorado Springs

I got the issue on eagles on Saturday, went out hiking on Sunday along Fountain Creek, and was treated to the sight of a Bald Eagle not more than 200 feet over my head. You are very right when you say, "don't feel embarrassed if the sight of an eagle brings a lump to your throat. Eagles just kind of do that to you." When I see several, I have to hold on to myself to keep from dancing like a kid—sometimes I do!



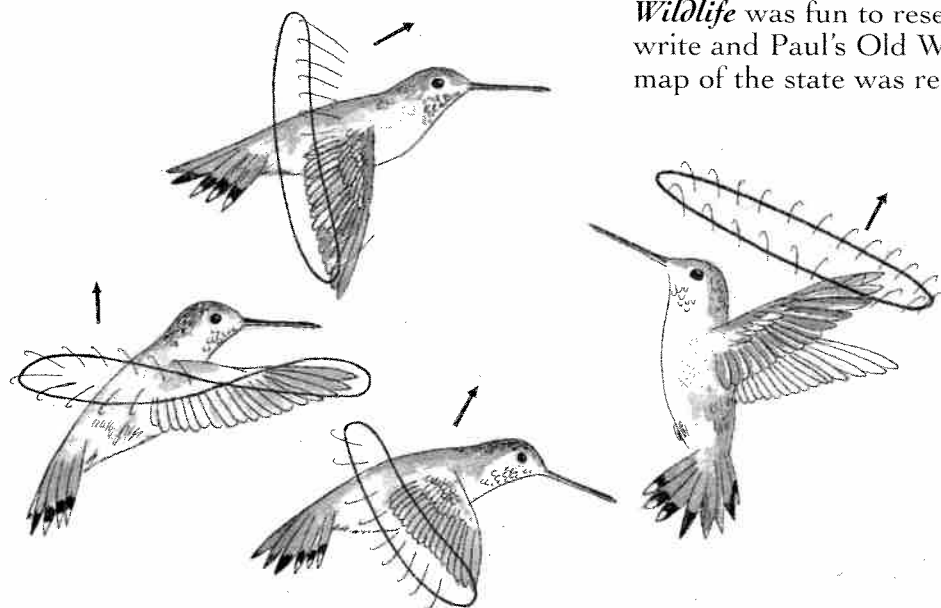
**POLLY REETZ**, reader, Denver

I always enjoy Colorado's Wildlife Company for its readability and solid biological and sociological information. One of my favorite issues was on reptiles and amphibians of Colorado. Some issues I keep in my file to use when I'm writing letters to state agencies or elected representatives.

**Colorado wildlife have faced many threats over the last century and a half, not always successfully... But today one single enemy looms as the greatest threat to wildlife in our state—loss of habitat.**

Habitat Loss:  
*The Real Threat To Wildlife, Habitat Crisis*. Winter 1990

very thing I was wondering about.



**The syrinx, or voicebox, of a bird is located at the bottom of the windpipe, not up top like ours. Birds lack vocal cords but achieve their marvelous melodies by expelling air across delicate membranes in the syrinx, controlling the pitch via muscles attached to these membranes.**

A Songbird Primer,  
*Songs of Colorado*,  
Summer 1992

**Perhaps they seem like a wildlife Mutt and Jeff—the elk, a majestic deer weighing 700 pounds, a mountain king known for its haunting autumn bugling and magnificent rack of antlers; the pika, a six-ounce furball, busily defending its rock pile home with squeaks and warning barks. Certainly no two mammals could be less alike. Yet in the scheme of energy transfer, the elk and pika are very alike. Both are herbivores, first level consumers with a vital role to convert plant tissue to animal tissue.**

Why Is A Pika Like An Elk?,  
*Plants "R" Us*,  
Summer 1991

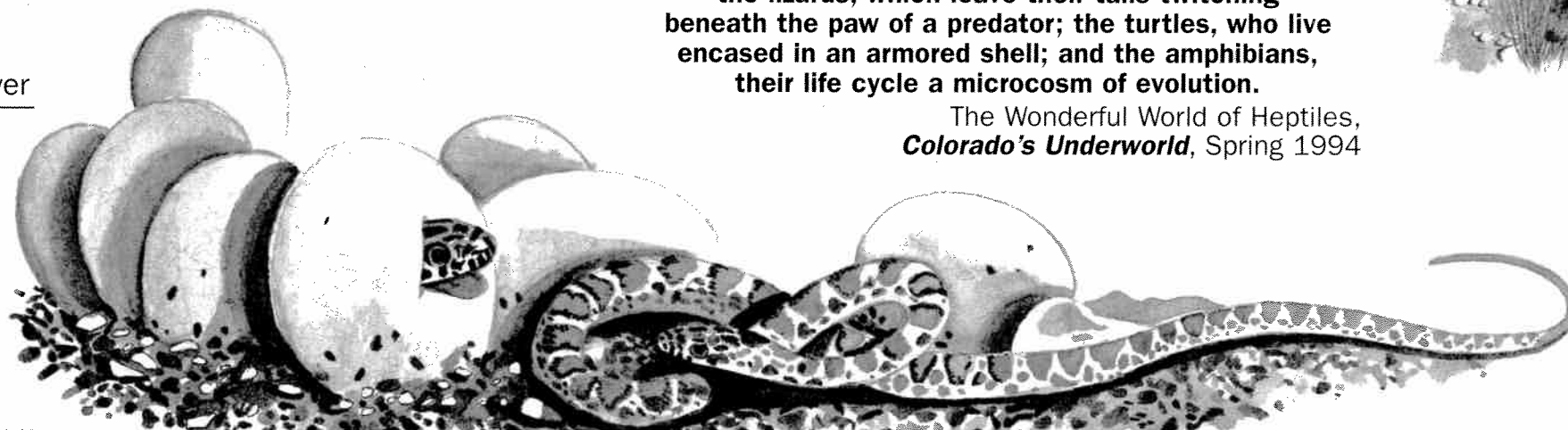


**JAN DUVAL**, CWC originator

I really like the article on "The Food Chain Revisited." I remain committed to the concept that all life is interconnected, and I'm finding that people simply do not understand why this is true or why it is important.

**The initial reaction to herps is often Eek! or Eew! But take a different perspective, and these creatures are beautiful, fascinating, colorful and unconventional. There are the snakes, limbless animals that glide through the world on their bellies; the lizards, which leave their tails twitching beneath the paw of a predator; the turtles, who live encased in an armored shell; and the amphibians, their life cycle a microcosm of evolution.**

The Wonderful World of Heptiles,  
*Colorado's Underworld*, Spring 1994



**Try to describe a snake and you come out sounding like a gunslinger hurling insults in a B western; You limbless, slithering, fork-tongued, cold-blooded, scaly-skinned reptile!**

What Is A Snake?,  
*Colorado's Underworld*

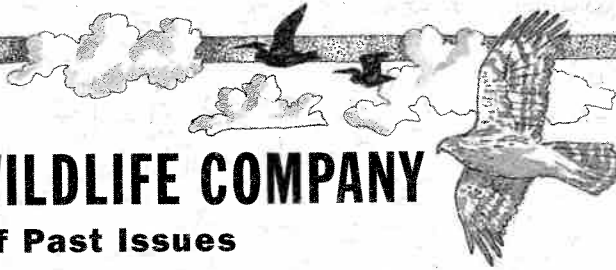
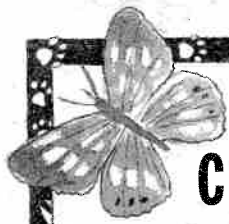
aloor and appear highly disdainful of our presence. A delightfully educational publication.



**LINDA CURTIS**, reader, Trinidad

Coming here from Springfield, Illinois to make our home was a big change for us. The wildlife and plants here kept me scrambling to the library for more and more information. Then we started receiving the issues of CWC. They were chock full of information that is so helpful in understanding not only what I see on our land but how things work here for the environment. So, how can I say which is my favorite? Each one is as important to me as the last, or the one I'll be receiving.





# COLORADO'S WILDLIFE COMPANY

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*\* indicates back issues available*

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