Join avian ecologist Amy A. Yackel Adams for a discussion of Colorado’s state bird: the Lark Bunting. Between 1966 and 2003, Lark Buntings have declined annually by 2.5% in Colorado and 2.1% in the High Plains physiographic region. Why the decline? Come and find out (or, at least, find out results from recent efforts to answer this question). The Pawnee National Grassland is an important breeding ground for Lark Buntings, and research there has focused on the species’ nesting survival, fledgling survival, and female fecundity. From her years of research, Amy will use photographs, description, and graphs to inform us of the natural history and population status of the Lark Bunting on the Pawnee National Grassland. Come and develop an awareness of this amazing species and its shortgrass prairie habitat.

This past spring, Amy finished her PhD in Ecology at Colorado State University. Her dissertation research focused on the population demography of Lark Buntings, with emphasis on estimation of post-fledging survival and factors influencing survival of young and annual fecundity. Cumulatively, Amy has 11 years of grassland bird research experience in both tallgrass and shortgrass prairies.

**Lark Buntings of the Pawnee Grasslands**

*Ecologist Amy A. Yackel Adams discusses their natural history and population status*

**THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAM — January 12, 2006**

Ludlow Room, Fort Collins Lincoln Center, 417 W. Magnolia Street

Social Gathering - 7:00 PM, Program - 7:30 PM
NOVEMBER–JANUARY
FIELD TRIPS

All field trips are free of charge and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Attendees should dress appropriately for the weather. Bring snacks, water, and binoculars and/or spotting scopes if you have them. Carpooling is encouraged. A $2.00 (unless otherwise specified) contribution per passenger to the driver is suggested. Visit http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon for more information. For all field trips and surveys, please contact the trip leader for signup and trip details, or contact the Field Trip Coordinator, Connie Kogler, at ckogler@mac.com or 970-622-9710.

12/3/2005 Saturday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Cole Wild at birdingwild1@yahoo.com or 970-310-3735. Fort Collins' newest natural area, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area, is projected to be open in 2006. Fort Collins Audubon performs a monthly bird census for the city. All levels welcomed. Participation limited. Contact leader for signup and trip details.

12/4/2005 Sunday. Fort Collins Winter Birdwatching. Leaders: Various CBC group leaders. This session will prepare participants for the upcoming Christmas Bird Count, with special emphasis on correct identification of raptors, junco subspecies, and Cackling and Canada geese. Contact Nick Komar at quetzal65@comcast.net or 970-416-7527 for meeting times and locations.

12/17/2005 Saturday. Fort Collins Christmas Bird Count. Leaders: Nick Komar at quetzal65@comcast.net or 970-416-7527 and Sue Riffe at shelllew2@comcast.net.


12/26/2005 Monday. Rawhide Christmas Bird Count. Leader: Ron Ryder at ronr@lamar.colostate.edu or 970-482-8089.

TBA (December). Nunn Christmas Bird Count. Leader: Jim Sedgwick at jim_sedgwick@usgs.gov or 970-226-9466.

TBA (December). Greeley Christmas Bird Count. Leader TBA. Contact Gary Lefko at 970-897-2454 or lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org.


1/1/2006 Sunday. Loveland Christmas Bird Count. Leader: Nick Komar at quetzal65@comcast.net or 970-416-7527.

1/14/2006 Saturday. North Weld Raptors. Leader: Gary Lefko at 970-897-2454 or lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org. Visit north Weld County in search of raptors.

1/22/2006 Sunday. Fossil Creek Reservoir Bird Survey. Contact Nick Komar at quetzal65@comcast.net or (970) 416-7527. Fort Collins Audubon performs a monthly bird census for the county. All levels welcomed. Participation limited to five plus leader. Contact leader for signup and trip details.

Note: Occasionally, new field trips may be announced or details may be finalized between issues of the Ptarmigan. Please visit our website and click on “Field Trips,” or call the FCAS message center at 490-BIRD to check for updated field trip information.
FCAS Publicity Flyers Available on Website
We have made it easier for our members to help publicize FCAS programs, field trips, classes, and events. FCAS Flyers are now available on our website. You can print them out and post them in locations convenient for you. Go to www.fortnet.org/audubon/flyers.pdf or visit our home page and click on the flyer icon in the left column.

New E-mail address for FCAS:
If you have general correspondence for Fort Collins Audubon, or are not sure who to send your request to, you can use our new e-mail address: Audubon@fortnet.org

Election of FCAS Officers and Directors Set for January 12
We are pleased to announce that we have a slate of candidates for the elected positions called for in our Bylaws. Election will be held at the January 12, 2006 Program Meeting. Because there is only one name for each elected position, the slate will be adopted by acclamation, unless there are any nominations from the floor. Officers on the slate: President (second year of 2-year term) - Joel Hurmence; President-elect - no candidate; Vice President - Phil Friedman; Secretary - Scott Cobble; Treasurer - John Waddell. Directors on the slate: Beth Dillon, Nick Komar, Ron Harden, Heman Adams, Ruth Grant and Sue Riffe.

Symposium: Windpower and Wildlife in Colorado
Learn more about interactions between wildlife and windpower by attending this symposium January 23-25, 2006, at the Ramada Inn at I25 in Fort Collins. The symposium aims to make available up-to-date information about the effects of windpower development on wildlife and ways to minimize impacts in Colorado; make available information about applicable laws, regulations and guidance associated with windpower and wildlife in Colorado; and foster an open dialogue between the wildlife conservation community and the wind industry in Colorado. For more information, contact David Klute, Bird Conservation Coordinator, Colorado Division of Wildlife, david.klute@state.co.us, 303-291-7320. This symposium is being planned in conjunction with the Annual Winter Meeting of the Colorado Chapter of The Wildlife Society (January 25-27). The Wildlife Society meeting theme is “Energy and Natural Resources: Finding the Balance.” Visit www.wildlife.org/chapters/co for more information.

Avian Appreciation Days at Bath Nursery and Garden Center
Avian Appreciation Days will take place January 28-29, 2006. Fort Collins Audubon will have a booth at the annual event held at Bath Nursery and Garden Center, 2000 E. Prospect Rd. in Fort Collins (http://bathgardencenter.com/). This is a great opportunity to learn more about our wild and domesticated feathered friends while telling visitors about the FCAS mission. To volunteer to help staff the FCAS booth, contact Volunteer Coordinator Ellen Wride at 970-215-0056, EVW9609@aol.com. Plan to stop by!

FCAS Silent Auction Scheduled for February 9
Plan to take part in our 4th annual FCAS Silent Auction preceding our Special Program Meeting on February 9, 2006. This fundraiser relies on donation of auction items and friendly competition among generous bidders. The proceeds are used to finance a number of FCAS endeavors, including our newsletter, monthly programs, educational activities, scholarship fund, and Audubon Colorado lobbyist. If you have items of good quality that you would be willing to donate, please contact Joel Hurmence at jhurstence@hotmail.com or 970-481-2124.
We Have A New Field Trip Coordinator!

Gary Lefko has passed the torch of Field Trip Coordinator to Connie Kogler. Connie moved to Loveland in August from Montrose, where she was active in Black Canyon Audubon. Welcome, Connie!

Anyone interested in leading field trips, not necessarily just birds, are encouraged to contact Connie to discuss what you have in mind. She is looking for leaders for anytime within the next three to six months and beyond, as well as your ideas and thoughts on field trips. E-mail preferred! (ckogler@mac.com) Also, if you are interested in leading a field trip and would like ideas, give her a call at 970-622-9710.

Christmas Bird Count

The 106th annual Christmas Bird Count is upon us, with numerous counts planned for the period Dec 14–Jan 5. The Fort Collins CBC will take place on Saturday, December 17th. Contact information for this count, as well as those for Loveland, Rawhide, North Park, and Boulder, is provided in the Field Trips section of this newsletter. Other Colorado counts are listed at the Colorado Field Ornithologists website at www.cfo-link.org. This year, we expect as many as 120 participants to count all the birds (about 100 species) during daylight hours (plus some nocturnal owling) in Fort Collins and Loveland. Hopefully, the CBC data will continue to document the return of wintering Trumpeter Swans to Larimer County! Data collected by volunteer observers among more than 2000 CBCs are crucial to understanding long-term trends in bird populations. For those interested in honing their identification skills for wintering birds in Fort Collins in preparation for the CBC, field trips are being planned for Sunday, December 4th.

Upcoming Programs

February 9 (Thursday). Silent Auction and Special Program. 6:30 p.m. Columbine Room, Fort Collins Lincoln Center

The 4th annual FCAS Silent Auction begins at 6:30 p.m. After the silent auction, several members of the Fort Collins teen Girl Scout group GECCCOs (Girls Experiencing Camping, Cycling and Canoeing Outdoors) will present a program on their December trip to East Africa, including a safari and the ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

March 9 (Thursday). Program. 7:00 p.m. Ludlow Room, Fort Collins Lincoln Center

Paul Marinari of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will present a program on the Black-footed Ferret Recovery Project.
Adopt an IBA (Important Bird Area) for Pawnee National Grasslands

How can birders and other conservationists get involved with bird and other wildlife conservation at the Pawnee National Grasslands? Several Audubon organizations are working together with the Pawnee National Grasslands (PNG) administration to support conservation efforts to protect and expand bird habitat at the PNG. The group will monitor the site, assess conservation issues, develop a conservation plan (building on existing plans of the Pawnee National Grasslands), and help implement that plan. Through this more proactive stewardship process, we hope to avoid and address any threats to birds and/or bird habitats at this Important Bird Area.

You can participate in several ways!

- **Conservation Work Projects:** The PNG has several projects that will help restore habitat for birds and other wildlife.
  - **Hauling** everything from refrigerators to tin cans off of the PNG where target shooting has littered and poisoned the landscape. Mark your calendar for April 22. Four hours of work, then a little birding.
  - **Moving** salt licks to concentrate cattle grazing to expand Mountain Plover habitat.

- **Monitoring:** The PNG needs help monitoring their efforts at expanding and enhancing habitat for Mountain Plovers and other shortgrass prairie species. After training, monitoring will be conducted in May, June and July.

- **Public Education:**
  - **Helping** photographers, bird watchers, hikers and other PNG users understand restrictions in areas where birds are nesting. This includes areas for protecting Mountain Plovers and raptors.
  - **Expanding** educational resources for PNG users, including the development of a brochure that has photos of common birds along with a short summary about each.

- **Providing Public Input into Conservation Issues:** Continuing a long Audubon tradition of providing public input into the PNG’s conservation plans and policies to address wildlife and other management issues.

If you want to get involved in any way, please contact Charles Thornton-Kolbe at CharlesEtk@yahoo.com or 303-777-7588. (This is Chuck’s work phone number, but feel free to call at any time.) Please consider attending our kick off meeting on February 16, 2006, from 7:00 p.m. until 8:15 p.m. (tentative) in Windsor (tentative). This meeting will include Greeley area Audubon members, and the location is about 15 minutes from both Fort Collins and Greeley. Please call for more information.

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Annual Legislative Workshop Set for February 25

The Audubon Society of Greater Denver and the Enos Mills Group of the Sierra Club are again co-sponsoring the Annual Legislative Workshop for 2006. The workshop will be held on Saturday, February 25, at the First Plymouth Church (southwest corner of Colorado Blvd. and E. Hampden Ave. in Denver) from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Both Audubon and Sierra Club lobbyists will present information on bills that the Legislature is considering. Their talks will include a question and answer session, and will be followed by several break-out sessions. A potluck lunch will be served at noon. Cost of the workshop is $12 in advance or $15 at the door. To register or receive more information, contact Denver Audubon at info@denveraudubon.org or 303-973-9530.
Congratulations to FCAS member and photographer Nancy Bell, whose photo has been selected by National Geographic as an award winner to be published in their January 2006 issue! Her photo of a Violet-bellied Hummingbird was taken at Umbrellabird Lodge, Ecuador. I hope to have some of Nancy’s bird photos added to our FCAS display panel in the upcoming months.

Wildlife photography and videos have been a special feature at my house recently. I’ve been watching some wonderful wildlife videos, all available free of charge! Fort Collins Public Library has a limited selection but includes some good Roger Tory Peterson videos on backyard birding and bird identification. A more recent addition is *The World of Raptors*, with beautiful footage of hawks, eagles, owls, discussion of challenges facing these birds, “tours” of viewing raptors and a “field guide” at the end. Narrated by Joann Woodward and featuring Morley Nelson.

Perhaps more interesting to members is the availability of many videos in the library at Colorado Division of Wildlife, 317 West Prospect near the Hilton hotel, and supervised by librarian and FCAS board member Jackie Boss. The public may check these out along with many wildlife books and journals. I selected a handful of videos and was interested to find many covered not only wildlife, but also the human and political challenges now facing their survival. *Colorado Outdoor Getaways* features several DOW sites I was not familiar with, *Footprints on the Rockies* covered most species of wildlife in Rocky Mountain National Park and included areas to look for them at specific seasons of the year and observation and photographic ethics, *Gunnison Sage Grouse* discussed how a community has come together from diverse backgrounds and interests to help support an endangered species. *Where the Buffalo Roamed* begins with the historical importance of the bison to the Plains peoples, but wanders into early settlement patterns and contemporary life settlement patterns and their effect on wildlife. *Amended Migratory Bird Treaty* sounded pretty dry, but offered lively scenes of Alaskan native villages and arguments on subsistence hunting, concluding that regulations can only be successful if all the people impacted by the decisions are consulted and included. *Simply Wildlife* is a relaxing view accompanied only by natural sounds of Colorado’s wildlife heritage.

And at last, I have free access to all the volumes of Audubon Society’s excellent video field-guide series. I find it helpful to see the bird, its name, and hear its song and call all at the same time, as well as viewing the maps of the bird’s territory at different times of the year. Some recent DOW-produced videos are also available for sale, and would make a nice Christmas gift, along with our new *Wildscapes* book on backyard habitat gardening in Colorado.

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**Better Birding, Better Living**

Lynne Hull, Education Chair

Fort Collins Audubon Message Center

FCAS now has a telephone number you can call to hear a recording about upcoming events. You can also leave messages with suggestions or questions for FCAS. Call 970-490-BIRD.

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**Fort Collins Audubon Society Members!**

*Free!* E-mail News Service Now Available!

- Receive regular news posts on FCAS events
- Get timely monthly meeting reminders
- Hear of volunteer opportunities as they arise

Visit [www.fortnet.org/Audubon/](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon/) to learn more and to subscribe to this new members-only service.
Conservation Corner
By Carol Fiore, Conservation Chair

“Hope is the thing with feathers” wrote the poet Emily Dickinson. I’m sure that I am not the only one who has looked out the window on a particularly trying or difficult day and felt my spirit lifted as I watched the antics of a beautiful bird, a feathered friend.

Without conservation efforts, future generations may not be able to find comfort and joy in our avian companions. We live in difficult and stressful times for conservation. As man struggles to extract the last drops of oil from the earth, critical wildlife areas become more and more vulnerable to attack. As more people populate the globe, birds are left without habitat. As toxins fill the air and soil, their homes are poisoned. It is frightening to watch the destruction and too often people throw up their hands in despair and exclaim “I give up!” My friends, we can NEVER give up the fight. It is up to all of us to do what we can to save the birds we so love. And don’t fool yourselves. We are in a deadly fight. Something has got to be done or we are going to lose many species. The famous ecologist E.O. Wilson said that diversity is what makes our lives rich. The loss of even one bird species is unacceptable. We are in the Audubon Society because we care.

As Conservation Chair for the past two years, it has been my privilege to work with some very fine individuals. We have accomplished a considerable amount of work and have acquired a reputation for the Ft. Collins Audubon Society as a group who is active in conservation. I couldn’t have done this without the amazing efforts of the Conservation Committee. A big thanks to Todd Ringler, Scott Cobble, Phil Friedman, Kathy Herbener, Lynne Hull, Cade Coldren, and Bill Miller. Please consider becoming the new Conservation Chair for 2006. It is rewarding, and I am always available to help guide you. Please call if you’re interested!

Take Action

Let your Senators know you support funding for the Everglades Restoration Project. Congress must include $35 million in the Energy and Water Appropriations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to advance this project, which is critical to birds and other wildlife. The Senate Conferees are meeting to decide dollar differences in the Energy and Water Spending bill, so call, e-mail, or write your Senators. Give the Everglades full funding.

Kudos and Raspberries

Kudos to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and to the governors of New Jersey and Delaware for considering a two-year moratorium on horseshoe crab take. This is a critical conservation move to protect both the crabs and the migrating birds that depend on them (especially the Red Knot). More kudos to all the groups who helped with this effort: American Bird Conservancy, Defenders of Wildlife, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, New Jersey Audubon Society, Delaware Audubon Society, and the National Audubon Society.
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Membership Application
Join the Fort Collins Audubon Society (FCAS) directly, or automatically become a member by joining the National Audubon Society (NAS). Choose one below:

☑ New or Renewing Member of FCAS (annual dues) $15
(Receive the Ptarmigan newsletter)
☐ FCAS may share my name with NAS

☐ New Member of NAS & Chapter $20
(Receive Audubon magazine and Ptarmigan)

☐ Renewing Member of NAS & Chapter $35
(Receive Audubon magazine and Ptarmigan)

Did you know? Less than $1 of your NAS dues is left for FCAS funds. FCAS serves NAS members through its own fundraising efforts. We appreciate your financial support!

Additional donation to FCAS $_______
Total enclosed $_______

Name: _________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________
City: ___________________ State: ____ Zip: ___________
Phone: ______________ E-mail: ____________________

☐ I prefer to receive the Ptarmigan via the FCAS website.
Please e-mail me when posted.

Please make your check payable to FCAS and send along with this form to: Fort Collins Audubon Society, PO Box 271968, Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968.