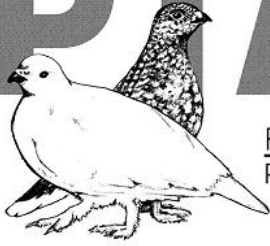


PTARMIGAN



FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 271968 • Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968 • www.fortnet.org/Audubon

Promoting the appreciation, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, through education, participation, stewardship, and advocacy.

January 2009

Volume 40, Issue 5

Endangered Colorado River Fish Have Key Role in Conservation of Western Colorado Rivers

Dr. Ed Wick, Fishery Biologist and Fort Collins Master Naturalist

The Colorado pikeminnow, North America's largest minnow, evolved into the river basin's top predator, historically reaching lengths of five feet and weights of 100 pounds. It migrates hundreds of miles through the river system's rugged canyons to reach special spawning sites. The endangered razorback sucker evolved to take advantage of floodplains during the spring flood. It feeds like a whale, straining dense zooplankton blooms. A young razorback spawned in early spring can reach a foot long in its first year if it gains access to a floodplain rich in food.

Dr. Wick will talk about these endangered species and their habitat, the Colorado River Basin, which occupies approximately eight percent of the continental land mass of the United States. Because the river basin was isolated from other river basins for millions of years, 74% of its fish fauna are endemic species. Above Lake Powell,

only 13 other species co-evolved. Four of these species are endangered and are struggling to survive changes introduced by human development. Life histories of these very unique fish are only recently being understood so recovery efforts can be implemented.



Geoffrey Hammerson – Yampa-Green Confluence

Dr. Ed Wick has studied the biology, behavioral ecology, and habitat requirements of the endangered native fish species of the Colorado River System for more than 30 years. As both a private research consultant and working in conjunction with numerous governmental agencies, Ed has focused the majority of his research efforts on the Yampa, Green, Little Snake, White, and Colorado Rivers. He is an extraordinary field teacher—an eloquent and compelling spokesman for the conservation of the native fish of the Colorado River System.

FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Visit our website at www.fortnet.org/Audubon or call 970-490-BIRD.

Printed on recycled paper 



Field Trips, Programs, Classes, and Events



January 2009

1/1/09, Thursday. Loveland Christmas Bird Count. Contact: Connie Kogler at 970-622-9710 or zblueheron@gmail.com.

1/3/09, Saturday. Barr Lake Christmas Bird Count. Open to all Participants. Please preregister. The meeting time and place for this count will be from 6:30 to 7:00 a.m. at the Village Inn in Brighton located just north of Bromley Lane on the west side of US 85. Contact: Bill Kaempfer, kaempfer@colorado.edu Home: 303-954-8998, Cell: 303-717-5063.

1/10/09, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural Area Tour. 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Primrose Studio, near Reservoir Ridge Natural Area. Exploring nature continues with a new schedule of 2nd Saturday adventures. This year we will explore twelve of Fort Collins' natural areas. Each tour will be led by a master naturalist who will explain "What's special about this place?" All tours are from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. For further information, contact Joann Thomas at 970-482-7125 or email at jthomas91@aol.com.

1/11/09, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting (dbretting@swloveland.com, work: 669-1185, or home: 669-8095). Meet at 7:00 am. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed.

February 2009

2/14/09, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural Area Tour. 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Prospect Ponds. Exploring nature continues with a new schedule of 2nd Saturday adventures. This year we will explore twelve of Fort Collins' natural areas. Each tour will be led by a master naturalist who will explain "What's special about this place?" All tours are from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. For further information, contact Joann Thomas at 970-482-7125 or email at jthomas91@aol.com.

2/15/09, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting (dbretting@swloveland.com, work: 669-1185, or home: 669-8095). Meet at 7:00 am. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed.

2/17/09, Tuesday. Photographing Denver Zoo Birds, Wild and Captive. Leader: David Leatherman (daleatherman@msn.com). Head down to the Denver Zoo for an all-day trip to look for wild birds on the grounds, captive birds in the exhibits, practice photography, and just discuss what a person can learn from viewing a "bird in the hand". Admission is \$9 for adults under 65, \$7 for adults 65 and over. If the weather is good enough to get down there but too cold to be outside for long stretches, we can always retreat to

Tropical Discovery or the Bird House when needed. Dress appropriately in any case! Intriguing species like White-throated Sparrow, Greater Scaup, and Common Grackle have been seen there in winter, along with waxwings, yellow-rumped warblers, creepers, etc. Among the North American species on exhibit are Pileated Woodpecker, Smew, Barrow's Goldeneye, Black Brant, Snow Geese, Hooded Merganser, Trumpeter Swan, White Pelican, Scarlet Ibis, Steller's Sea-Eagle, American Flamingo, and Bald Eagle. Leave Fort Collins from the Transportation Center on the north side of Harmony just west of I-25 at 8:30a, returning to the Transportation Center at 4:30p. Bring a lunch or purchase one at the Zoo. Bring binoculars and handheld camera gear (digiscoping would probably be too cumbersome, at least for indoor exhibits).

2/21/09, Saturday. Small Nocturnal Montane Winter Owls. Leader: Nick Komar. Co-leaders: Eric DeFonso and Sue Riffe. Join us as we head out into the winter night to find Northern Saw-whet Owls in Rist Canyon and Boreal Owls up at Cameron Pass. Both species begin their courtship calling in mid-winter, and therefore should be as easy to detect as they can be. We'll be looking and listening for these birds from the road primarily. We cannot guarantee that we'll be able to get a visual on the birds, but our chances are improved if we can hear them. This is a great opportunity to learn new things about these mysterious birds which live near us year-round, yet so few people ever actually experience. We will meet at 8pm, at a location to be determined, and plan on returning to Fort Collins around 2am. Carpooling will be required, to reduce potential impacts on the owls as they enter their breeding season as well as simply ease transportation. If the weather is uncooperative our backup day *may* be the following Saturday, February 28. To sign up, contact Eric DeFonso by email at yoericd@yahoo.com or by phone at (970)-472-1761.

2/28/09, Saturday. Earth and Sky Walk, 9:00 a.m. - noon, Reservoir Ridge Natural Area, Fort Collins. Leader: Eric DeFonso (yoericd@yahoo.com or 970-472-1761). This will be a variation on my usual quarterly weather walks. We will add a new component to the walk, and discuss the geologic history of Fort Collins and Colorado, and its influence on the weather and climate that we experience in the modern day. We will be interpreting the rocks and the clouds all on the same walk! Note: this is a somewhat more strenuous hike than my past walks at Nix, but not as strenuous as the hike at Coyote Ridge. If you've never been to this place, now's a great time - we will have wonderful views from the high point on the trail. Meet at the parking area at the trailhead, off Michaud Road near Overland Trail. Contact me if you need additional assistance finding this area.

All field trips are free of charge (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Participants should dress appropriately for the weather. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Carpooling is encouraged. A \$3.00 (unless otherwise specified) contribution per passenger to the driver is suggested. Visit www.fortnet.org/Audubon for more information. For all field trips and surveys, please contact the trip leader for sign up and trip details. Field Trip Coordinator: Eric DeFonso, yoericd@yahoo.com or 970-472-1761.



Upcoming Programs



February: "Owls of the Northern Front Range" presented by, Stephen Jones, Author and Boulder County Audubon member

March: Co-meeting with Northern Colorado Native Plant Society. Encore Presentation! Speaker David Showalter, photographer and Colorado Book Award Winner for *Prairie Thunder: the Nature of Colorado's Great Plains*

2009 Legislative Forum on February 21

An all-out attack on Colorado's new oil and gas regulations, particularly the ones that attempt to protect wildlife habitat, and an assault on the legislation that enabled them, are expected for the 2009 legislative session. Find out what our legislators will be up to and meet the Audubon and Sierra Club legislative liaisons as well as some of the influential members of the Colorado General Assembly, on Saturday, February 21. We'll have a continental breakfast during registration, which starts at 8:30 a.m. and a pot-luck lunch with guest speakers from the Legislature. In between, Audubon lobbyist Jen Bolton and Sierra Club legislative director Gary Lindstrom will give us their latest reports on the session, followed by discussions of the really hot issues of 2009 with experts such as Mike King, Deputy Director of the Dept. of Natural Resources. The conference ends at 1:30 p.m. Make plans now to attend!

Cost: \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. Some scholarships are available to people who will help with set-up and clean-up. Location: First Plymouth Church, 3501 S. Colorado Blvd., Englewood (southwest corner of Colorado and Hampden Ave.) Time: 8:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

To register: Call the Audubon Colorado office at 303-973-9530; or
Go online at <http://www.denveraudubon.org> ; or
Print off the form below and mail it to:
ASGD office, 9308 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Littleton, CO 80128.

+++++

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State/zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

I will attend the Legislative Forum on Feb. 21, 2009.

My check for \$12, made out to ASGD, is enclosed.

Charge \$12 to my credit card. Type: _____

Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

+++++



Conservation Corner

By Bill Miller - Conservation Chair



The Old Administration – Leaving With Some Final Insults Midnight Regs: Now Featuring a Weakened Endangered Species Act!

As of December 12, 2008, and with just 39 days left in office, the Bush administration issued a final rule change on the Endangered Species Act that removed a provision requiring U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientists to make sure that endangered species won't be harmed by federally approved logging, mining and road-building projects. Those reviews will now be conducted by other federal agencies, like the Army Corps of Engineers or the Federal Highway Administration. Environmentalists and congressional Democrats say these agencies may want to ensure that a project moves forward despite concerns about endangered species, and therefore can't be trusted as independent overseers.

"It's a classic example of letting the fox guard the henhouse. It would allow thousands of projects that harm endangered species to move forward without mitigation,"¹ said Noah Greenwald, biodiversity program director for the Centers for Biological Diversity, an environmental non-profit opposed to the rule. Greenwald's group and two other environmental organizations immediately filed a lawsuit² challenging the rule in a Northern California district court.

Business interests support the changes, saying that it will remove an onerous policy that has blocked important projects. The U.S. Chamber of commerce, in a media release, indicated that it welcomed Secretary Kempthorne's "common sense approach" to the Endangered Species Act, which will ensure that numerous infrastructure projects move forward.

In a separate announcement³, the Fish and Wildlife Service said that the rule change will prevent the effect of greenhouse gases on threatened wildlife from being factored into the Endangered Species Act. Environmentalists have argued that global warming's impact on the habitat⁴ of the endangered polar bear should be considered in the construction of new power plants.

Dirk Kempthorne, secretary of the Department of the Interior, has argued that the Endangered Species Act was never meant to be applied toward the regulation of greenhouse gases⁵. The last-minute nature of the rule change puts Fish and Wildlife officials on a forced march to sort through more than 200,000 comments about the proposal.

The change to the Endangered Species Act, which will be difficult for Obama to reverse⁶, is one of many midnight regulations⁷ we've been tracking.

1. http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press_releases/2008/endangered-species-regulations-12-11-2008.html
2. http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/esa_in_peril/pdfs/complaint_ESA_regs.pdf
3. <http://www.fws.gov/news/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=27A58FDE-922A-2B50-ED394D030EE543BD>
4. <http://www.nwf.org/polarbearsandglobalwarming/>
5. http://www.doi.gov/news/08_News_Releases/080811a.html
6. <http://www.propublica.org/feature/can-obama-turn-back-the-clock-on-bushs-midnight-rules-1118>
7. <http://www.propublica.org/special/midnight-regulations#eq-5759>

The New Administration's First 100 Days

Recently Fort Collins Audubon "signed" on to a letter itemizing the 100-Day Priorities for Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as generated by the American Lands Alliance and sent to David Hayes, the head of President-elect Barack Obama's Energy and Natural Resources Transition Team, and other team members. We were one of 98 organizations, representing 1.5 million people, that signed on to the letter. The actual letter can be viewed by clicking on the following link: http://www.americanlands.org/assets/docs/Forest_100_Day_Ltr_Priorities_FINAL.pdf

Following the six-page letter found at the link above are the numerous specifics being requested of the Obama Administration once it is in place. It is really hard to grasp the magnitude of the damage and destruction that the outgoing Bush administration has inflicted upon the environment and the environmental regulations that were developed over the three decades or so before the year 2001 when he was administered the oath of office. What is even more difficult to comprehend is why Bush (and cronies) perpetrated such a vendetta upon the environment. That is, until you realize that it was all about short-term profits at the expense of so many other things, including America's citizens and their environmental future.

January 20th, 2009, can't arrive any too soon. Here is wishing you a New Year that will be better than 2008!

Bill Miller, Conservation Chair, Fort Collins Audubon Society



Welcome new and renewing members!

We hope to see you at our programs and field trips.



Don and Linda O'Brien
Linda L Pirie
Joan M Glabach
Vicki Loseke
Mary R Beck

Joyce A Jones
Connie Kogler
Ann Molison
Gloria J Packard
Edith B Thompson

Education Corner

By Joann Thomas - Education Chair

My Bucket List of Wonder and Awe



As winter embraces us and all of nature, only humans can reflect on the yearly passage of seasons. For me, those reflections grow deeper and more meaningful each year. With climate change a growing reality, I wonder what will disappear before I can see it and feel it; for it is that experience of wonder and awe that moves us to cherish and protect.

Author Joe McGinniss, writing in *Going to Extremes*, his book about Alaska, captures the essence of "wonder and awe" in nature. He describes a hike taken in Gates of the Arctic National Park. His group of hikers climb through a "steep-sided narrow passageway" in some rocks and enter a hidden meadow. He writes, "All was still. There was nothing here. There never had been. And given its location-hidden behind a ridge at the far end of a dead-end valley in an obscure section of the continent's most remote mountain range...there was every reason to believe that we were the first human beings ever to see it..."

"We remained hushed and still. It seemed almost sacrilegious to venture further. It was awe, rather than exhilaration, that we felt, with the sky now gray again above us, and the gray mountain walls muting the green of meadow grass, and with the shallow lake so perfectly still and mirror-clear. Slowly, savoring each step, and almost reluctant to put a foot down where, in all likelihood, no human foot had ever been before, we proceeded through the meadow to the far end."

McGinniss' words inspire me to create my list of places in nature to see and feel—to experience wonder and awe. A list of places I'd like to visit and things I'd like to do before...well, my own bucket list. Before I leave the earth, I'd like to go...

Walking among penguins in Antarctica. My father died before fulfilling his dream of visiting there. I've always wanted to go for him.

Watching the northern lights in the Arctic. Simply put, they fascinate me.

Riding among the polar bears in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. Polar bears possess the extremes of ferocity and playfulness all in one living creature.

Touring Iceland. A haunting landscape of volcanoes and glaciers.

Riding a Zodiac right up to a whale, staring in its eye, and feeling the consciousness of such a giant creature.

Visiting a tropical forest, riding a zip line in the tree tops, hearing the monkeys howl, seeing a Quetzal, and climbing a volcano.

I doubt that I'll ever enter a place where "no man has gone before", but my list contains the promise of experiences that would satisfy my soul—places where no "Joann" has gone before.

FCAS CONTACTS

Audubon@fortnet.org

President

Joel Hurmence
970-481-2124

jhurmence@hotmail.com

Conservation Chair

Bill Miller
970-493-7693

5mcorp@comcast.net

Membership Chair

Shelagh Tupper
970-490-BIRD

Shelagh.tupper@gmail.com

Education Chair

Joann Thomas
970-482-7125

jthomas91@aol.com

Field Trip Coordinator

Eric DeFonso
970-472-1761

yoeric@yahoo.com

Birdathon Coordinator

Heman Adams
970-484-8634

hempurdy@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Joe Martin
970-412-2481

joe3eagles@gmail.com

Address Changes

Shelagh Tupper
970-490-BIRD

Shelagh.tupper@gmail.com

For other FCAS contacts visit
www.fortnet.org/audubon/leadership.htm

Want less paper mail? Get your newsletter online!

The current issue of the newsletter is available online to members only. If you'd like to receive an e-mail notification, please e-mail your **name and address as it appears on your newsletter's mailing label** and the e-mail address you wish to use to shelagh.tupper@gmail.com. Please indicate email only or both e-mail and paper.

Monthly Newsletter Distribution

Paper: 700 (84.1%)

E-mail: 132 (15.9%)



**Do you really need
the paper version?**



Fort Collins Audubon Society
 PO Box 271968
 Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968

NON PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 US Postage PAID
 Fort Collins, CO
 Permit Number 184

In This Issue!

Regular Monthly Features

Program: Endangered Colorado River Fish	Page 1
Field Trips, Programs, Classes, and Events	Page 2
Upcoming Programs	Page 3
2009 Legislative Forum	Page 3
Conservation Corner	Page 4
Education Corner	Page 5
Welcome To Our New And Renewing Members!	Page 5
Get Your Newsletter Online	Page 5
FCAS Contacts	Page 5

The White River by Canoe
 Date: May 29-31 (Fri-Sun), 2009
 Cost: \$320 adult, \$280 child (age 6-16)
 Level: Beginner / Intermediate



The Colorado River by Sea Kayak
 Date: August 7-9 (Fri-Sun), 2009
 Cost: \$335 adult, \$280 child (ages 6-16)
 Level: Beginner

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**