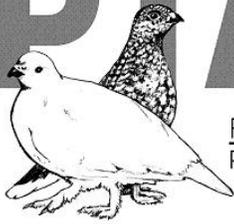


PTARMIGAN



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.

May 2010

Volume 41, Issue 5

Save the Trees for the Birds



Support a Paperless Ptarmigan

The FCAS needs your support in turning the Ptarmigan newsletter into an online publication.

Did you know that it costs over \$8100 per year to publish and mail nine issues of the Ptarmigan? That is over \$900 per issue!

Please help us cut our expenses and leave more in the budget for our mission of conservation, education, habitat

preservation, and protecting birds and other wildlife.

We will send you a monthly email announcement when the newsletter is posted on the Web site.

We realize, however, that some of you still need to receive your Ptarmigan by mail. If you have already requested, or now request your Ptarmigan via U.S. mail, you will continue to receive it by post.

Please let us know your preference by one of the following:

1. EMAIL: FortCollinsAudubonMembership@gmail.com
2. PHONE: 970-490-2473

Double Feature Program "Connecting Youth to Nature: Research from a Diversity of Settings" and "Spring Migrants and Vagrants"

Brett Bruyere, director of the CSU Environmental Learning Center, will summarize research conducted during the past two years on engaging youth and families in programs about



ELC file photo.

nature.

His findings indicate a strong interest in such programs by families around the country from Fort Collins to the Bronx to the southern tip of

Thursday Evening Program

May 13, 2010

Fort Collins Audubon Society

Social hour begins 7 p.m.

Presentation: 7:30 p.m.

Fort Collins Lincoln Center

Columbine Room

417 W. Magnolia, Ft. Collins

The event is free and open to the public.

(Double Feature continued from Page 1)
 the Big Island of Hawaii, but that a number of barriers can prevent participation. Come learn how we can better engage diverse groups, and how FCAS is doing their part to address those barriers.

In the second program, Eric DeFonso, Fort Collins Audubon's Field Trip Coordinator, will present a slideshow of birds seen during spring migration in Colorado and beyond. He will include a narrative of where these birds are likely coming from, where they are headed, and how long they'll be there.

This show is designed to inspire you after our seemingly endless winter, to get you thinking of spring as an especially glorious delight, and to get a glimpse of splendid birds arriving from

March through June as they do every year in a wonderful, yet mysterious procession. It will be an opportunity for you to share your own stories of birds seen during this exciting season of diverse species.



Black and White Warbler by Eric Defonso.

FCAS CONTACTS

Audubon@fortnet.org

President

Karl Krahnke
 970-622-9535

kkrahnke@gmail.com

Conservation Chair

Bill Miller
 970-493-7693

5mcorp@comcast.net

Membership Chair

Liz Pruessner
 970-484-4371

fortcollinsaudubonmembership@gmail.com

Education Chair

Joann Thomas
 970-482-7125

jthomas91@aol.com

Field Trip Coordinator

Eric DeFonso
 970-472-1761

yoeric@yahoo.com

Program Chair

Jessie Meschievitz
jmesch@slbbi.com
 970-686-1424

Newsletter Editor

Carol Jones
 970-482-6295

cjones@cowisp.net

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

A Message from the Membership Chair

Thanks to all who opted for the electronic version of the newsletter via our postcard in last month's Ptarmigan. We had a great response! But there was a problem with several email addresses. If you find that you are still receiving the Ptarmigan by mail and you opted for the electronic version, please send me an email and include your name and address as well as the email address. Send email to: fortcollinsaudubonmembership@gmail.com

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

Wild Birds Unlimited
 3636 S. College Ave
 Ste. C
 (970) 225-2557

Bath Garden
 Center & Nursery
 2000 E. Prospect
 (970) 484-5022

Jax Outdoor Gear
 1200 N. College
 (970) 221-0544

Jax Farm & Ranch
 1000 N. Hwy. 287
 (970) 484-2221

Ranch-Way Feeds
 546 Willow St.
 (970) 482-1662

The Matter Book-Store/Bean Cycle Coffee
 144 N. College
 (970) 472-4284



Conservation Corner _____ by Bill Miller

"I do not intend that our natural resources shall be exploited by the few against the interests of the many."
-- President Theodore Roosevelt

"I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in."
-- John Muir, Sierra Club Founder

Upcoming Birdathon

What is a Birdathon? It is a 24-hour period during which there appear to be demented individuals traveling all over attempting to identify as many different species of birds as possible.

However, despite appearances, things really are not that crazy. In reality, these folks actually work on behalf of conservation, raising funds for the conservation efforts of FCAS. At least half of the monies raised through pledges to the Birdathon are applied toward the chapter's scholarship activities.

This year the FCAS Birdathon will be held on Friday and Saturday, May 14-15. The Birdathon is carried out by teams of two or more people that determine when and where they will bird. Following the counting period, those team members who so desire will meet socially to brag about the number of species and most unusual species seen that day. Birds must be wild, so the 129 pheasants in a game farm north of town are not eligible; same for the pink plastic flamingo on someone's front lawn.

The Birdathon requires three things: 1) team leaders, 2) team members, and 3) lots of pledges! Team leaders determine their team's itinerary, i.e., the numerous locations where their team

will venture and the order in which those locations are visited. All team members are responsible for spotting birds, but, in some cases, identification is often left to the more experienced team members.



Wilson's Phalarope by Nick Komar.

Each team member is responsible for collecting as many pledges as possible in support of the chapter's conservation efforts. Pledges may be of two types: a fixed amount, regardless of the number of species identified; or an amount per species. All financial contributions are tax-deductible to the donor and team members also may itemize their automobile expenses.

The Birdathon serves as the single largest fund raiser for the chapter. We receive very little money for memberships,

so the chapter's expenses must be met by other funding sources. Our largest expense is our newsletter, followed by our scholarship program. Unfortunately, due to fiscal realities of this year, we had to eliminate the education scholarships. The Birdathon also introduces less experienced members to other, more experienced birders as well as to new birding locations.

If you wish to be a team leader, a team member, and/or a donor, contact Bill Miller, Birdathon Coordinator, at 5mcorp@comcast.net or (970) 493-7693.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members — Thank You!

Robert & Dorothy Adel
Rick Anderson
Trish Armstrong
Rick Barry
Julie Bleau
Sylvia Bockman

Jacqueline A. Boss
Tim & Anne Butler
Curtis A. Cramer
Margaret Daggett
Gerald H. Delaney
Larry DeMers

Michael Emptage
Gilbert H. Fechner
Hollie Flint
George F. Freytag
Betty Frost
Jim Ganjo

Glover Inc.
Southridge Golf Club-
Rob Gregory
Vince Griesemer
C.A. Harshfield
(Members continued on Page 4)



Upcoming Field Trips

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 (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 signup and trip details



May 2-7, Sunday through Friday. Colorado Grouse Tour. Leader: Jess Brauch. To reserve a seat or for more information, contact Nick Komar, 970-449-3645, info@quetzalfoundation.org.

Join us for a 6-day tour of Colorado's resident gallinaceous birds. Tour target species include: Greater Sage-Grouse, Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Dusky Grouse, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Greater Prairie-Chicken, Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Wild Turkey, Chukar, Gambel's Quail, Scaled Quail, Northern Bob-



Dusky Grouse by Nick Komar.

white, and Ring-necked Pheasant (some of which require special permits or permission for viewing). Our route circles the entire state during spring migration, so we will see more than 150 species!

Viewing and photographing the birds will take priority, so expect a relaxed pace while viewing the birds (but lots of driving each day). Trip is limited to six participants (including companions). Cost: \$1195 per person (or \$995 per person double occupancy) includes ground transportation, five nights lodging, viewing fees. Profits benefit FCAS and the Quetzal Foundation.

May 9, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com; work, 669-1185; or home, 669-8095. Meet at 7 .am. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed and encouraged!

(Members continued from Page 3)

Paul Hegland	Rastall
Joan D. Henderson	Jeanna Remmick
Joel Hurmence	Angie Richman
William Hurmence	Cynthia Rizzo
Joyce Jones	Linda Robinson
John Jones	Jordan D. Sabine
Edward Kiefer	James L. Shafer
Mike Lacy	Anne Stewart
Melissa Mather	Phyllis Streepy
Dennis Meader	Dannah Swift
Barbara Miller	Stacy Taeuber
L.M. O'Brien	Larry Williams

June 6, Saturday. Spring Sparrow Roundup.

Leader: Eric DeFonso, voericd@yahoo.com; 472-1761. Join Eric for a different kind of outing: spending a whole day

in search of sparrows! From the plains to the foothills, we will seek out a range of fabulous, fun, yet often overlooked "little brown jobbies." This includes juncos, towhees, longspurs, and, of course, our state bird, the Lark Bunting!

We will try to see and hear as

many as we can in a day, with a reasonable shot at 17 different species! These species are found in a wide range of habitats, from the short-grass prairie to high-elevation meadows, so plan on us doing a fair amount of driving as we seek out their diverse habits and ecology. Meeting place and time TBD, so call or email for details, but be prepared for an early start and a lengthy day. Participation to be limited to six total, including leader, to make viewing and trip coordination easier.



Chipping Sparrow by Eric Defonso.

June 13, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com; work, 669-1185; or home, 669-8095. Meet at 7 a.m. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed and encouraged!

June 26, Saturday. Burrowing Owl and Mountain Plover Field Trip. Leader: Bill Miller, 5mcorp@comcast.net; 493-7693. Reservations and car pooling required. Limit:15 plus leader. Meet at 6 a.m. at the Harmony Transportation Center, west of I-25. Travel to the Pawnee National Grasslands in search of burrowing owls, mountain plovers, and anything else that we encounter. Bring your hats, sun screen, water, snacks, binoculars, and scope if you have one. We'll try to return by 1 p.m.



People in Nature

As the new facilitator of the FCAS annual canoe/kayak adventure, I invite you to join us on August 20-22 for a great adventure. It's not about the adrenalin rush of a physical adventure, it's about the introspective glimpse that an outdoor river trip gives you.

Our greatest nature and travel writers, like Peter Mathiesen and Paul Theroux, offer insights into adventure travel, but the greatest aspects of their stories are their internal observations or struggles. One can meet oneself on a simple three-day canoe trip.

Last year I faced all my fears when my daughter and granddaughter joined me for the FCAS kayak trip on the Colorado River.

Both of them were seasoned river rats, but I'd never "run the river," and, I am not a swimmer. To further the challenge, I had knee surgery in June just two months before our August trip.

What I discovered was the love of my family and the kindness of strangers. My two girls could not do enough for me. They lowered me into the kayak on one leg; Gigi, my daughter, put up my tent every night; Josie, my granddaughter, walked me carefully over the



Lunch on a sand bar on last year's kayak trip.

rocky path to the "groover;" and, then she braided my hair every morning. Together, they coaxed me into the cold water to float downriver in the fast current with only our life vests for support—an exhilarating experience I never would have had without them.

John Waddell, fellow FCAS board member, hung in there as my kayak companion even though I clacked his paddle on almost every stroke and consistently got us into eddies that turned us around to face the rest of the gang. Around the campfire, one of our guides shared stories of his former life as a Hollywood special effects technician. We laughed a lot!

Yes, I remember the Bald Eagles, the Blue Grosbeaks, and the bear; but, most of all I remember the kindness; the companionship; and the sharing of space, sustenance, and self.

My invitation is not idly given. It is heartfelt. Check out the description of the Audubon trip at www.centennialcanoe.com. Centennial Canoe Outfitters gives us a donation for every Audubon member who signs up by June 20, 2010.

Fort Collins Bird Notes—by Eric Defonso

The days are getting ever longer and warmer, and, as they do, we are seeing many birds that have been absent for quite some time, or, in some cases, decades. David Dunn of Greeley located a *Yellow-throated Warbler* at Crow Valley



Yellow-throated Warbler by Tom France.

campground on April 9, and it was seen by a few others since then. This is a pretty rare species here: according to the Colorado Birds Record Committee, the last time a *Yellow-throated Warbler* was documented in Fort Collins was in 1983, by our own Dr. Paul Opler on the CSU campus! This individual is

likely gone as you read this, but take time this season to search riparian areas or tall tree stands at Crow Valley or here in Fort Collins, like Dixon Reservoir or the Poudre River area at Lee Martinez Park, for any kinds of rare eastern warblers that may be passing through as vagrants or rare migrants on their way to breeding grounds up north. Last year, a number of *Northern Parulas* and *Hooded Warblers* passed through. We even had a *Worm-eating Warbler* here and a *Kentucky Warbler* down in Boulder. Who knows what will show up this year. Prairie species of all kinds are found now on the Pawnee Grasslands, so on your way out to Crow Valley to find those rare warblers, don't forget to check out our annual returning birds: *Mountain Plovers* and *Burrowing Owls* are regular nesters on the grasslands, and by early May look for our state bird, the *Lark Bunting*, as well as its other sparrow cousins, *Brewer's Sparrow*, *Lark Sparrow*, *Vesper Sparrow*, and, if you're lucky, *Cassin's* and *Grasshopper Sparrows*!





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

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Membership Application

Join FCAS directly, or automatically become a member by joining the National Audubon Society (NAS). Choose one the following:

- New or renewing member** of FCAS annual dues
 (Receive the *Ptarmigan* newsletter) \$15
- New member** of NAS and FCAS \$20
 (Receive *Audubon* magazine and *Ptarmigan*)
- Renewing member** of NAS and FCAS \$35
 (Receive *Audubon* magazine and *Ptarmigan*)

Did you know? Less than \$1 of your NAS dues goes to fund FCAS. 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: _____ Email: _____

***Ptarmigan* is delivered via email unless otherwise requested.**

I prefer to receive *Ptarmigan* via US mail.

Please make checks payable to FCAS and mail with this form to: Fort Collins Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 271968, Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968