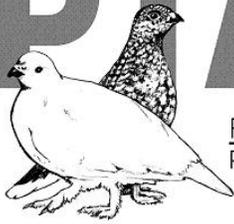


# PTARMIGAN



FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 271968 • Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968 • [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon)

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

March 2010

Volume 41, Issue 3

## 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](mailto:FortCollinsAudubonMembership@gmail.com)
2. PHONE: 970-490-2473
3. MAIL IN the enclosed postcard as soon as you receive this issue!

## Small Mountain Owls

The Flammulated Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and the Boreal Owl are the four species of small mountain owls found in America's Rocky Mountains. The lives and ranges of these tiny predators are detailed in the book,

"Small Mountain Owls." FCAS is pleased to have its author, Scott Rashid, present photos and narratives of his book at its monthly program meeting, Thursday, March 11.



*Northern Pygmy-Owl with Red-breasted Nuthatch. Photo by Jim Osterberg.*

In the book, "Small Mountain Owls," Rashid details the lives and ranges of these tiny predators, including information concerning their

*(Owls continued on Page 2)*

### Thursday Evening Program March 11, 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.

(Owls continued from Page 1)

anatomy, coloration, vocalizations, ranges, courtship and nesting behaviors, egg laying, fledging raising, hunting habits, diets, mortality, longevity, and much more. The engaging text reflects Scott Rashid's passion for these tiny owls.

Rashid is an experienced rehabilitator, bander, artist, illustrator, and author. He currently lives in the Estes Park area where he helps with raptor rehabilitation and bird banding.

Please join us on Thursday, March 11, at 7 p.m. in the Fort Collins Lincoln Center to meet Scott Rashid and enjoy an educational and entertaining evening about Colorado mountain small owls. Copies of "Small Mountain Owls" will be available for sale and author signing.

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## Fort Collins Bird Notes

by Eric DeFonso

*Fort Collins Bird Notes is a short summary of birdly goings-on in and around the Fort Collins area. Information is compiled from area listservs and word of mouth, and is not yet examined yet by the Colorado Records Committee.*

Believe it or not, the *White-winged Crossbills* that were found by David Leatherman at the Grandview Cemetery on November 22 are still being seen. They went AWOL for the better part of two weeks, but apparently they are nesting or at least roosting somewhere near the cemetery. Keep searching the tops of the spruces covered in cones, but also listen for their staccato "ved-ved-ved" calls.

As our cold winter continues, many in town are still seeing a good assortment of typical foothills species in and around feeders, like the *Brown Creeper*, *Red-breasted Nuthatch*, and *Mountain Chickadee*. The *Mountain Chickadee* resembles our usual in-town occupant, the *Black-capped Chickadee*, but is slightly larger, is gray rather than buffy on the sides, and sports a stylish white eyebrow stripe, while the *Black-capped* lacks it. The *Brown Creeper* is a small streaky brown bird with white underparts that prefers to scale trees upward, gleaning small invertebrates from the bark, while nuthatches prefer to face downward. The *Red-breasted Nuthatch* is similarly sized to the creeper, is bluish on the back, and has a buffy (and not truly red) breast. Like the *Mountain Chickadee*, it too has a sporty white eyestripe. Best of all is its characteristic call note, a nasal tinhorn-like repetitious "yank."  
*(Notes continued on Page 3)*



*Brown Creeper by Eric DeFonso.*



## Trees

“I speak for the trees...,” says the Lorax in one of Dr. Seuss’ most famous books, reminding my children’s generation of the value of trees. For my generation it was, “I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree,” by Joyce Kilmer. Often when viewing a magnificent tree, I think of the first part of Kilmer’s line.

Trees are truly wonders—of biology and of beauty. Here in Fort Collins, we are fortunate to have not only our native species, but due to the forethought of our city forester, Tim Buchanan, we have samples of many trees that do not ordinarily grow here. For example, did you know that we have a sequoia here in Fort Collins? For more information about the Fort Collins city forestry program go to <http://www.fcgov.com/forestry/index.php>.

*Metasequoia*, commonly called dawn redwood, is one of three species of conifers known as redwoods. Although shortest of the redwoods, it grows to at least 200 feet (60 meters) tall. It is a popular ornamental.

After having the fact that conifer is not synonymous with evergreen drilled into my head during classes I took this winter, I learned that we have a deciduous conifer in City Park—a larch. In the family *Pinaceae*,



Dawn redwood.

the larch is not indigenous to Colorado.

A good tree field guide and some perseverance are all you need to identify many of our trees. For example, pines often are designated as yellow or white pines. While this is a lumber industry labeling to differentiates hard wood (yellow) from soft wood (white), it is a convenient way of grouping pines. I used the two ls in yellow as a

memory device to make identification easier: those two ls look like the two/three needle clumps of the yellow pines. The species classified as white pines have three to five needles.

While the biology of trees is fascinating, the beauty of trees and their ability to inspire awe touches me. I remember being speechless standing in a kauri forest in New Zealand, where the tallest kauri is 168 feet tall. The coniferous kauris are among the largest and most ancient in the world. No wonder that the latest movie hit, “Avatar,” uses trees as a basis for the biology of the planet Pandora.

I join the inhabitants of Pandora in holding the trees sacred; I join Joyce Kilmer in exalting the beauty of trees; and I join the Lorax in speaking for the trees. For if we don’t, who will?

(Notes continued from Page 2)

Don’t know about you, but back in mid-February, I started noticing the *Northern Flickers* getting a little frisky in the yard. Now the males are starting to make more of their long calls—the sustained “ki-ki-ki-ki-ki-ki-ki” calls often followed by one hammering on siding or gutters. These calls and hammerings are a way for the males to declare their territorial ambitions to each other and not an attempt to casually destroy our property. Another frisky *Northern Flicker* sound is the endearing “wee-ka wee-ka wee-ka” often given between a pair of birds checking each other out. In any case, it’s a sign that spring is finally on the way!

### 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

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

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

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

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

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



## 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 \$3.00 (unless otherwise specified) contribution per passenger to the driver is suggested. Visit [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon) for more information. For all field trips and surveys, please contact the trip leader for signup and trip details

**March 7, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com); work: 669-1185, or home: 669-8095. Meet at 7 a.m. **Note:** The date for this month has been changed from the usual second Sunday to the first Sunday. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed and encouraged!

**March 20, Saturday. Area Raptors.** Leader: Eric DeFonso, [yoericd@yahoo.com](mailto:yoericd@yahoo.com) or 472-1761. We'll meet at the Watson Lake State Wildlife Area near Bellvue at 9 a.m. A habitat stamp is suggested but not required. We will go in search of raptors of all kinds: hawks, eagles, falcons, and maybe an owl if we're lucky. Plan on carpooling and bring a scope if you have one. We'll be out for about five hours, so bring snacks and water.

**April 3, Saturday. Gull Identification Workshop.** Leader: Nick Komar, [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net), or 416-7527. Meeting place and time TBA. Join us as we take a closer look at the numerous gulls that grace our area in the cold season. Gulls can be challenging to identify, but they have the benefit of being easy to find and generally cooperative. We may visit one or several lakes and reservoirs, depending on recent gull activity.



*White-tailed Ptarmigan by Nick Komar.*

**April 11, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto: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!

**April 24, Saturday. Beginner Birding Trip.** Leader: Nancy Howard, [Nancy.Howard@state.co.us](mailto:Nancy.Howard@state.co.us). Meet at Cottonwood Hollow Natural Area in Fort Collins; time TBA. Join Nancy for a low-key birding trip in town, in a great birding spot!



*Scaled Quail by Nick Komar.*

**April 25-30, 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](mailto: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 Bobwhite, 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 (12-person van), five nights lodging, viewing fees. Tour profits benefit FCAS and the Quetzal Foundation.



“This we know: The Earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the Earth. This we know: All things are connected like the blood that unites one family. All things are connected.”

— A Speech by Chief Seattle (Skokomish) in 1854

“We are about half a century away from being ecologically and economically bankrupt because of global warming.” — Andrew Simms, “Demand for 'Kyoto tax' on the US,” *BBC News*, 6 Dec 03.

## What Climate Change?

The continental United States has experienced an almost unprecedented amount of snow this winter. In the week previous to Feb. 14, all states, except Hawaii, had snow on the ground. In addition, temperatures have been brutally cold in many locations. According to those who deny the existence of global warming, these two phenomena are obvious indications that there is no such thing as global warming.

Or are they?

Unfortunately, the whole issue of climate change recently became rife with controversy. Last November, the contents of some 3000 emails were hacked from the servers of the Uni-

versity of East Anglia's Climate Research Unit. Email messages from some of the world's most influential climatologists were published on the Internet indicating that there is still some disagreement among climatologists with respect to certain details of climate change. The naysayers jumped upon the disagreements, claiming it shows that all climate research is faulty.

In the December 2008 *Ptarmigan*, I pointed out that the term “global warming” is a politically-loaded term. Those with little scientific understanding can fall into the trap of thinking that the entire earth is warming up uniformly. Then, when we experience colder-than-normal temperatures, the uninformed readily jump to the conclusion that global warming is a hoax. The term “climate disruption” is a more accurate term to describe what is currently happening on Earth. Please visit the following sites for a better understanding of what is meant by climate disruption: [http://www.rockymountainclimate.org/website%20pictures/Less%](http://www.rockymountainclimate.org/website%20pictures/Less%20Snow%20Less%20Water.pdf)

[20Snow%20Less%20Water.pdf](http://www.rockymountainclimate.org/website%20pictures/Less%20Snow%20Less%20Water.pdf)

[http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/17661/gobal\\_climate\\_disruption.htm](http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/17661/gobal_climate_disruption.htm)

[http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/uploads/2007\\_11-6\\_Forum\\_\(NXPowerLite\).pdf](http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/uploads/2007_11-6_Forum_(NXPowerLite).pdf)

[http://www.whrc.org/resources/online\\_publications/warmingearth/climate.htm](http://www.whrc.org/resources/online_publications/warmingearth/climate.htm)



Very little was accomplished at the 2009 Copenhagen climate change conference, primarily because the major industrial powers of the world were unwilling to take the first steps to voluntarily curb

their own greenhouse gas emissions. Such steps are viewed by some as damaging to their national economies. What those individuals and corporations will say 20 years from now when global conditions have plunged our economies into dire straits as a result of water shortages, crop failures, sea level rises, and so forth?

Fortunately, the arguments by skeptics and naysayers can be countered by the application of good science and logical thinking. On February 9, Joshua Frank wrote for AlterNet, “How to Answer the Dumb Things Climate Deniers Say.” In the article, Frank gives a point-counterpoint discussion. The article as found at:

[http://www.alternet.org/story/145609/how\\_to\\_answer\\_the\\_dumb\\_things\\_climate\\_deniers\\_say](http://www.alternet.org/story/145609/how_to_answer_the_dumb_things_climate_deniers_say)

Scientific evidence shows that global climate disruption is real. Please consider expressing your concern to your elected representatives, at all levels of government.





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- New member** of NAS and FCAS \$20  
 (Receive *Audubon* magazine and *Ptarmigan*)
- Renewing member** of NAC 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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