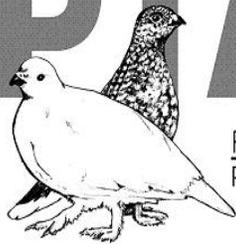


PTARMIGAN



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.

September 2011

Volume 42, Issue 6

A Colorado BIG YEAR

Presented by:

Cole Wild—Author of *Wild Birding Colorado*

Thursday Evening Program – September 8

Fort Collins Senior Center-Multi-Use Room—1200 Raintree Drive, Fort Collins

Social Gathering: 7 p.m.; Program: 7:30 p.m.

Colorado native Cole Wild offers an insider's view of the world of competitive bird watching in Colorado, a state with almost 500 bird species on the official state checklist. His recently published book, *Wild Birding Colorado*, provides an account of how Cole's Colorado Big Year established a new record for the most bird species seen in one year—

412 species. The entertaining account narrated by the author not only recounts comical and tense situations encoun-

tered during his extensive travels, but also provides a treasure chest of birding

tips for where and when to find some of the state's most elusive species, such as Sedge Wren and Black Swift. Most of the birds Cole observed as part of his Colorado Big Year were photographed, and many of his best shots will be displayed. After the presentation, Cole



Swainson's Warbler photo by Cole Wild.

will sign copies of his book, which will be available for sale before and after the presentation.

Please remember to provide us with any new email addresses or changes. Otherwise you may not receive your electronic version of the *Ptarmigan*.

Send changes to soilresearch@peakpeak.com

President's Corner

by Bill Miller

"Companies have three responsibilities: 1) make a profit, 2) satisfy employees, and 3) be socially responsible." -- Peter Drucker

"Ask not what your (Audubon) chapter can do for you, but what you can do for your chapter."
--Bill Miller, FCAS chapter president (2011-2012)

Changes in FCAS Membership Policy

Our chapter's single largest expense is the publishing and mailing of nine monthly issues of the newsletter, the *Ptarmigan*. Every month it costs the chapter a little over \$1 each to mail out about 550 newsletters.

The economic reality is that it costs us more to service National Audubon Society (NAS) members with our chapter newsletter than those same members contribute to the chapter. In the past we have resisted removing those who have just a NAS membership from our newsletter mailing list; however, now we find ourselves in the position of being forced to reduce expenses associated with mailing the printed version of the *Ptarmigan*.

We encourage all NAS members to take out a chapter membership, and we are extending to all NAS-only members a three-month period of complimentary issues of the newsletter, after which you will receive only two issues per year, unless you become a chapter member. Details of how to become a chapter member are found in the membership application form on the last page of the *Ptarmigan*. If you become a chapter member between September and December 2011, you will remain a chapter member through all of 2012. After that, your chapter membership will be due for renewal in January of 2013.

Bird Seed Sale Fundraiser Event Coming in September and October

FCAS, in partnership with Ranch-Way Feeds, will hold a bird seed sale fundraising event in the months of September and October. Watch for more details and order forms that will be available at the September program meeting and in the October newsletter. We hope you will take this opportunity to feed your backyard birds with quality seed, and support the efforts of FCAS.



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

Welcome New National Members

FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending complementary copies of our newsletter for three months. We invite you to join us at our monthly programs on the second Thursday of the month to find out more about FCAS. National dues do not cover the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, so if you'd like to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan* after the three complementary issues, please join FCAS. See the details on the last page of the newsletter or at www.fortnet.org/Audubon.



“In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create, but by what we refuse to destroy.”
 – John Sawhill

“It is a curious situation that the sea, from which life first arose, should now be threatened by the activities of one form of that life. But the sea, though changed in a sinister way, will continue to exist; the threat is rather to life itself.” – Rachel Carson, (1907-1964) *The Sea Around Us*, 1951

Want to learn more about birding close to home? Everyone is invited to a free weekend of learning for the entire family during the 7th Annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair, Sept. 23 and 24. This year’s theme is, “Birding in your Backyard.” The weekend’s schedule follows and will feature birding field trips on Friday, Sept. 23 and fair festivities on Saturday, Sept. 24.

Sept. 23, Friday, 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Birding Behind the Scenes at Soapstone Prairie.

Transportation from Fort Collins provided. Fort Collins Biologist Aran Meyer and Educator Sue Kenney will take you birding to some areas closed to the public and share information about the internationally renowned Lindenmeier early man site. Free, registration required. Call 970-416-2815 or email naturalareas@fcgov.com.

Sept. 24, Saturday, 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space.

Guided bird walks at 7 and 7:15 a.m., hands-on activity booths, silent auction, and vendors 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Raptor releases throughout the day. Hour-long presentations at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., and 1 p.m. Interactive clinics at 10 a.m. and noon. Details at http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources/birding_fair.htm.

Sept. 24, Saturday, after 2 p.m. National Public Lands Day Service Project. Celebrate your public lands by volunteering! Sponsored by REI. Details will be announced at www.rei.com/fortcollins and at http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources/birding_fair.htm.

Sept. 24, Saturday, 7 a.m.-2 p.m. More Northern Colorado Birding Fair Events. Don’t miss the visit from Dr. Avian Guano (one

of the wacky alter egos of famous naturalist Denny Olson) who will entertain audiences of all ages with his theatrical and educational comedy. Other presentations will show you how to attract local birds to watch from your windows or use items from your garden to make bird houses. You can even test your skills mimicking bird calls at several bird call contests (kids to experts welcome), led by the Dr. Guano (who can make over 100 bird calls himself).

Visitors also will enjoy interactive booths, guided bird walks, a silent auction, a self-guided scavenger hunt, vendors showcasing birding equipment, and rehabilitated raptor releases. There will be food and drink available courtesy of the Larimer County Friend’s Group and the Berthoud Lion’s Club. Prizes will be available for children 12 years of age or under who complete their Birding Fair Passport.

Entry to the Northern Colorado Birding Fair is free, thanks to sponsorships and local vendors who participate, including this year’s presenting sponsors, Poudre Pet and Feed Supply and KRFC Community Radio. Donations are accepted.



Carin Avila of the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program releases an owl at the 2007 Fair. Photo by Bill Miller.

Directions and more information:

The Northern Colorado Birding Fair is at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space on Carpenter Road, one mile west of the I-25/Hwy 392 Windsor exit. A full schedule is at http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources/birding_fair.htm. To learn more about Larimer County’s parks and open spaces, go to www.larimer.org/naturalresources. For information about the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas program, go to www.fcgov.com/naturalareas.



To feed or not to feed—that is the question. And if you feed, what to feed in your bird feeder? In extreme weather conditions, birds may benefit greatly from our help, but generally what we provide is mainly for our enjoyment in watching them and keeping track of what species are around. In extreme cold and storms, some birds may really depend on feeders for survival. Often more important is the bird bath or other source of water in extreme heat and in winter.

If we do feed, what do we put in our feeders? First, specialty feeds that are beneficial. Niger thistle seeds are special for finches, Goldfinch, Pine Siskin and related species, and require special feeders. The commercially created suet cakes also require special feeders and are usually blended with seeds, fruit or berry bits, or peanut bits.

They also have the advantage, over butcher shop suet of not getting rancid or melting easily. Suet cakes are great for woodpeckers, Chickadees and others. Mealworms are high protein dishes for insect eaters like Bluebirds and birds with mixed diets. Special oriole feeders are available, and hummingbirds can drink from them also, which solves the problem of orioles spilling solution from hummingbird feeders. Don't bother placing grape jelly on oriole feeders as too much sugar displaces natural foods. Just use the same one part sugar to four parts water solution as for hummingbird feeders. The commercial oriole solution is not necessary.



Next is the question of seeds. A simple and effective choice is to offer black, oil sunflower seeds and white, Proso millet; a mixture of the two makes a very good cold weather feed. The millet can be eaten by the smallest perching birds.

Black, oil sunflower seed is high in calorie and furnishes oil that helps in cold weather. These can be purchased economically in large 25 or 50 pound bags, or can be purchased in shelled chips to avoid the buildup of shells under the feeder. I like to switch to Proso millet only in the summer for less expense and because that is all that is needed to attract feeder visitors. Other beneficial feeds are safflower seed and peanut chips.

What to avoid? Cracked corn is not necessary unless you are feeding Wild Turkey. Jays will eat cracked corn, but they will eat the others mentioned too, so avoiding it is more efficient and economical. Blends are a particular problem in selection—they are more expensive and often have unwanted ingredients. Don't buy blends with milo, which birds don't eat, or with cracked corn for the reasons already mentioned. Also, don't buy blends with red millet that has a bitter taste the birds avoid.

A last word: Regularly brush scrub clean your feeder with a sodium hypochlorite/water solution to prevent avian disease spread. Let it dry before re-filling. Then have fun watching your feeder visitors.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Nancy Abrahams
Rick Anderson
Kim Dunlap
Richard W. Fisher
Vincent Griesemer

Gregory E. & Debra K. Holman
Ashley E. Jackson
Barbara A. Jones
Joyce Jones
Sue P. Kenney

Dorothy Leising
Paul A. Opler
Jerry Partin
Joseph Polazzi
Lisa Polazzi
Robin Welsh

Your support makes our programs and conservation efforts possible, and helps us achieve our mission of connecting people to the natural world.



New Pawnee National Grasslands Auto Tour Brochure

This summer FCAS was approached by the Pawnee National Grasslands (PNG) staff, asking if we could contribute financially to the publication of an updated brochure for the PNG Auto Birding Tour. FCAS and the Audubon Society of



PNG District Ranger Lori Bell cuts the ribbon for the Birding Tour. Photo by Bill Miller.

Greater Denver (ASGD) each contributed \$300 toward the project. Both organizations were acknowledged by having their logos printed on the brochure's front cover, along with that of the U.S. Forest Service.

The brochures were first available at the grand opening of the newly upgraded Birding Tour

route on Saturday, June 25. The grand opening was held at the newly installed information kiosk located on Weld County Road (WCR) 96 (also known as Murphy's Pasture Road). Ribbon cutting was accomplished by PNG District Ranger Lori Bell and an unknown assistant (see photo). Visitors attending the grand opening included a Horned Lizard (see photo).



Horned Toad by Bill Miller,

Photographers whose photographs were included in the brochure also were acknowledged, including FCAS members Ron Harden and Bill Miller. Nine thousand were printed and are available at the aforementioned kiosk as well as at the PNG office in Greeley. In addition, a limited number of the brochures will be available at FCAS program meetings.

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 for more information. For all field trips and surveys, please contact the trip leader for signup and trip details.

Sept. 11, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All welcome.

Sept. 18, Sunday, Fall Migrants – Grandview Cemetery. Leader: Bill Miller, 5mcorp@comcast.net, home: 970-493-7693. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the entrance to Grandview Cemetery, located at the west end of Mountain Ave in Fort Collins.

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 Mercantile
950 E. Eisenhower
Loveland
(970) 776-4540

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

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





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Membership Application

Join Fort Collins Audubon Society (FCAS), National Audubon Society (NAS), or both. Check all applicable::

- New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member** \$20
(Receive the *Ptarmigan* by email)
- New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member** \$30
(Receive the *Ptarmigan* by postal mail)
- Additional Support for FCAS's Mission** \$_____
- New NAS Member** \$20
(Receive *Audubon* magazine by postal mail)
- Renewing NAS Member** \$35
(Receive *Audubon* magazine by postal mail)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Total Enclosed \$_____

Please make your tax exempt checks payable to FCAS and mail with this form to:
 Fort Collins Audubon Society, P.O. Box 271968, Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968
 Membership applications may be completed online at: www.fortnet.org/Audubon