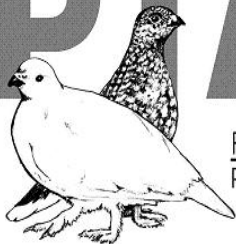


PTARMIGAN



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 2012

Volume 43, Issue 6

Colorado's "Coolest Bird"

Presented by: Jason Beason,

Special Monitoring Projects Coordinator for Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory

Thursday, September 13, 2012

Social Time: 7 p.m.; Presentation 7:30 p.m

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Drive

Regarded as Colorado's coolest bird, the Black Swift is one of the most mysterious bird species in the western United States. Despite its large distribution, it is also one of the least studied bird species in North America. Until 2012, there was virtually no information about where these birds went during the winter months. There are still information gaps about the life history of the species. We don't have a thorough understanding of its distribution and we have no idea of the total population size throughout its range. Most research on the species has taken place in Colorado, thanks to a small group of dedicated citizen scientists.

Jason Beason, Special Monitoring Projects Coordinator, Science Division of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, moved west after receiving a bachelor's degree from Ohio State University in 1990, where he majored in natural resources. He began birding and has since worked

on a wide variety of research projects involving birds in eight western states. He has conducted bird surveys in locations as remote as the Frank Church Wilderness Area in Idaho and as urban as "the strip" in Las Vegas, Nevada. He and his wife, Kerry, own and operate Rain Crow Farm near Paonia, Colorado, where they have tallied 173 species of birds.

You won't want to miss this presentation on Sept. 13 at the Fort Collins Senior Center. The program is free and the public is welcomed.



Black Swift by Lee Farrell.

Update Your Email Address

Hey FCAS Members—are you missing your electronic copy of the Ptarmigan? It could be a problem with your email address. Help us keep your information current by sending your email address to fortcollinsaudubonmember-ship@gmail.com. Please include your name and mailing address in the email so that we can find you in the members list.

President's Corner

by Bill Miller

"Democracy is not a spectator sport. Democracy is about the participation of citizens. It is a journey where diversity is celebrated, the public good is negotiated, and intense deliberation and dialogue are conducted. It is about being involved." --Miriam Wyman, *Learning to Engage*

"...democracy cannot survive overpopulation. Human dignity cannot survive it. Convenience and decency cannot survive it. As you put more and more people into the world, the value of life not only declines, it disappears. It doesn't matter if someone dies. The more people there are, the less one individual matters." -- Isaac Asimov

Bylaws Revisions

Periodically an organization must revisit its bylaws, made necessary because an organization evolves.

At its August meeting the FCAS board approved numerous bylaws changes, most of which were relatively minor wording changes, such as replacing "Chairperson" with "Chair." However there were significant changes to Article I on membership. It was clarified that members of the "Society" (FCAS chapter) would include those who (a) have paid dues to the National Audubon Society (NAS), (b) those who

have paid an annual newsletter subscription fee to the chapter, or (c) both.

Section 5 of Article I, which deals with removal from the Society's rolls, was expanded to include removal of those who have failed to renew their NAS dues and/or those who have failed to renew their newsletter subscription fee.

A new Section 6 was added to more accurately describe the services that those who have paid NAS-only dues will receive.

A complete marked-up version of the bylaws revisions is found at <http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon/>. Click on "About Fort Collins Audubon" and then on "Constitution and Bylaws (html)." These changes will be voted upon at the October program meeting.



Upcoming Elections

We are approaching the time when we will elect board officers and directors for 2013. We hope to identify three or more people to serve on a nominating committee and announce their names and contact information in the October issue of the *Ptarmigan*.

The problem we face every year is that for various reasons some current members of the board no longer wish to serve. Finding replacements for those individuals is never easy—it takes these volunteers, as well as money, to keep the organization operating.

Next month we will post brief job descriptions on the Web site so that you can determine if one of the available positions might be a good fit.

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"The suburb is a place where a developer cuts down all the trees to build houses, and then names the streets after the trees." -- *Bill Vaughn*

"The prevailing attitude towards nature is that form of heresy which denies substance and, in doing so, denies the rightfulness of creation. We have said - to the point of repletion, perhaps - that man is not to take his patterns from nature; but neither is he to waste himself in seeking to change her face."

-- *Richard Weaver (1910 - 1963), from "Ideas Have Consequences" (1948), page 171*

Why Conservation is Conservative_{tm}

ConservAmerica (formerly known as, Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP)) is a national organization of United States Republican Party voters formed in 1995. REP's stated purpose was to strengthen the Republican Party's stance on environmental issues and support efforts to conserve natural resources and protect human and environmental health. Incorporated in Illinois, its headquarters are in Sturgis, Michigan.

On March 30, 2012, REP President Rob Sisson and Chairwoman Tina Beattie announced that the organization would be changing its name to ConservAmerica. ConservAmerica had been the name of REP's sister 501(c)3 organization; that nonprofit is now called the ConservAmerica Education Fund.

The following is quoted directly from the Web site, <http://conservamerica.org/conservativequotes/>.

"The persistent myth that conservation and environmental protection are liberal causes continues to be perpetuated by the media, liberals, and many self-professed "conservatives." The truth is that conservation and environmental stewardship are core conservative values.

"The misperception stems from the fact that the GOP establishment has lost sight of these values (largely due to the influence of corporate lobbies and political leaders beholden to them for campaign support) and from the willingness of populist Democrats to

embrace environmental protection. The result has been a polarizing battle that is not at all about the advance of conservative principles, but rather the advance of special interest political agendas.

"Republicans for Environmental Protection and its sister organization ConservAmerica have been arguing that "Conservation is Conservative_{tm}" since their inception. The argument is based on essential elements of conservative thought that have been articulated by conservatives throughout history,

including the very founders of modern conservatism."

Following the above information, quotations are provided and attributed to the following "conservative" thinkers: Edmund Burke, Theodore Roosevelt, Irving Babbit, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, T.S. Eliot, Richard Weaver, Russell Kirk, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, John Saylor, Barry Goldwater, Gerald R. Ford, Ronald Reagan, Pope Benedict XVI, Pope John Paul II, Margaret Thatcher, John McCain, Newt Gingrich, Jeffrey Hart, William Harbour, Wendell Berry, Gordon Durnil, Rod Dreher, and Paul Weyrich.



FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending a complementary copy of our newsletter for one month. National dues do not cover the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, so to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan* after the complementary issue, please join FCAS.



Summer Snapshots

Ahh—summer vacation! Remember when the days seemed endless? As I age, my summer days seem to fly by. Travel, field trips, Mom's 90th birthday celebration, granddaughter's surgery, packing, and painting—where did endless days go?

But, as the days flew by, I was always conscious of the birds. Last year's failure to spot a Swallow-tailed Kite on my Florida visit haunted me and I was determined to find one this year. On a needed break from the hectic preparations for Mom's 90th birthday celebration, I took the road less travelled and spotted a large bird flying toward me. *What in the world is that big, dark bird with a tail like a swallow*. I thought.

Duh! Is my brain on vacation too? There it was—my first ever Swallow-tailed Kite, and bigger than I expected. I excitedly called my Florida brother with the good news; he could quit calling me every time he saw one. On the drive back to Mom's house, I could not stop seeing them everywhere. What a magnificent bird. How could I not have seen it last year?

Expectations, that's how. I have realized that I create a visual image of a bird in my mind and I look for that imagined bird—not the one that is. I did the same thing with the shrike. Looked one straight in the eye while frantically trying to

identify it before it flew, only to realize years later what it was. I'd created a larger bird in my mind because of the information I had about the bird being quite vicious.

Continuing my break, I drove the entire wildlife refuge on Merritt Island. With the Kennedy Space Center in the background, the cloudy, rainy day was perfect for viewing the myriads of immature birds—eagles, ospreys, herons, ibises, and many more. And, the best part of the afternoon: there is no cell phone reception. Three hours of uninterrupted intensive bird watching and identifying—a birder's dream!

In between travel, I joined the Audubon field trips. On our trip to North Park, a pair of rarely seen Long-billed Curlews stood right before us. Binoculars, cameras, and scopes were all engaged to experience the sighting of this bird—the only curlew to nest in Colorado. The North Park trip gave us many treats. An immature White-faced Ibis confirmed beliefs that these birds do nest in the area even though no active nests have been found. And, my personal favorite: a Cliff Swallow nestling pushing its head out of the small opening in the gourd-shaped nest while making food calls.

All in all, a memorable summer, not endless days anymore, but days filled with family, friends, and birds.



Long-billed Curlew

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

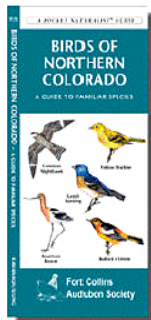
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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

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

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

Jax Farm & Ranch
1000 N. Hwy. 287
(970) 481-2221



Welcome New and Renewing Members

Hetty Bixby
Tami W Flach
Robert D Heer
Dr. William Henderson
Julie Holding
John R Matis
Larry Moskowitz
Laurie Paulik
Elizabeth Ross
Sandy Winkler

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



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.

Sept. 9, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com, work: 970-669-1185, home: 970-669-8095. Call for any change. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcome.

Sept. 22 (Saturday) or 23 (Sunday), Fall Shorebird Migration. Leader: Nick Komar, quetzal65@comcast.net. As an extension to the popular field trip series that FCAS and Quetzal Tours offered earlier this year, several additional day trips featuring the best of Colorado birding will be offered this fall. The first will be in September with a focus on fall shorebird migration. Six trip participants will spend the day on the mudflats of Jackson Lake in Morgan County. As many as 20 species of shorebirds (sandpipers, plovers, etc.) will be examined through tele-



Buff-breasted Sandpiper, juvenile, by Nick Komar.

scopes, and the fine details of their identification to species, age (juvenile versus adult), and plumage (basic versus alternate) will be explained.

Many other migrants should be encountered as well, including gulls, terns, pelicans, cormorants, waterfowl, raptors, and passerines in the thickets on shore. Funds raised from these trips support FCAS. Other trips in this series will be announced in future newsletters.

Trip fee of \$100 (\$80 for FCAS members) includes van transportation from Fort Collins/Loveland. These outings are expected to fill quickly, so register soon by emailing Nick. Indicate which day you prefer. Reservations will be taken on a first come, first served basis. If there are not enough participants to fill both days the Sunday trip will be canceled.

Sept. 27, Monday, High Plains Environmental Center Bird Watches. Contact: Joann Thomas, 970-482-7125 or jthomas91@aol.com. FCAS volunteers will provide its last 2012 guided opportunity for Audubon members and the public to experience the changes of the seasons at Equalizer Lake in Loveland, west of the Medical Center of the Rockies. The bird watches will be held twice on Sept. 27, once at 7 a.m. and again at 6 p.m.

Nov. 17-25, Andes of Ecuador Excursion. Contact: Nick Komar, info@quetzal-tours.com, or 970-449-3645. This fall, join fellow Auduboners in experiencing the mystique of Ecuador's Andean peaks and cloud forests. Quetzal Tours is offering an eight-day relaxed-pace birding adventure to Ecuador, led by the bilingual Ecuadorian birding guide, Xavier Muñoz. Not only will this be a unique experience at a low price (just \$1,999 per person), but the event also serves as a fundraiser for FCAS—a portion of the proceeds will be donated FCAS. Locations to be visited include Mindo, Nanegalito, Papallacta Pass, and Guacamayos Pass. Birding highlights will include dozens of species of brightly colored tanagers, hummingbirds, and, of course, quetzals—many of which can be seen at close range for breathtaking photography. Ecuador has the highest biodiversity in the world, hosting more bird species than any other country. The tour is limited to six customers in order to guarantee a quality, personalized experience. Add-on guided birding excursions to the Amazonian rainforests or the Galapagos Islands also can be arranged. Upcoming trips include Nicaragua (January 2013), Guatemala (February 2013), and Costa Rica (March 2013). For more information or to reserve your spot, contact Nick Komar.




Chestnut-breasted Coronet by Nick Komar.





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

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Membership Application

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

Name: _____

☐ **New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member** \$20
(Receive *Ptarmigan* by email)

Address: _____

☐ **New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member** \$30
(Receive *Ptarmigan* by mail)

City: _____ State: _____

☐ **Lifetime Chapter Member** \$750
Receive *Ptarmigan* by email ____
Or receive *Ptarmigan* by mail ____

Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

☐ **Additional Support for FCAS's Mission** \$_____

☐ **New NAS Member** \$20
(Receive *Audubon* magazine by mail)

Email: _____

☐ **Renewing NAS Member** \$35
(Receive *Audubon* magazine by mail)

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