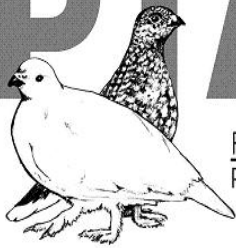


PTARMIGAN



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.

October 2013

Volume 44, Issue 7

“Canyon and Rock Wrens in the Foothills of the Front Range”

Presented by:

Lauryn Benedict, Assistant Professor, UNC

Nat Warning, Graduate Student, UNC

Thursday, Oct. 10, 2013

Fort Collins Senior Center; 1200 Raintree Drive

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



Rock Wren photo by Dave Leatherman .



Canyon Wren Photo by Dave Leatherman.

Lauryn Benedict and Nat Warning of the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) will talk about their research on Canyon Wrens and Rock Wrens at sites in Northern Colorado's Front Range. They map territories of the two species throughout Larimer County and research their breeding biology and ecology. Benedict and Warning also study vocal repertoires as a tool to understand how individual birds interact with one another. Don't miss this presentation in which Benedict and Warning discuss why these

birds live where they live, and why they sing what they sing.

Lauryn Benedict is an assistant professor at UNC. She studies bird song as a model system for understanding how communication signals evolve in nature. Nat Warning is an UNC graduate student, researching the habitat preferences, home ranges, and nesting habits of Canyon and Rock Wrens in Larimer County. Join us on Oct. 10 at the Fort Collins Senior Center. This program is free and the public is welcome!

President's Corner

by Joann Thomas

As I watch 2013 drawing to a close, I am totally amazed at the intensity and depth of the events in my life that relate to nature, its health and safety. Unprecedented events, like the recent floods, wreak havoc on the land and our perceptions of where we stand in relation to it. I stood in the exact spot of the survivors of these monumental floods in 2005 when, two weeks after Katrina, I rode down once familiar streets struggling to find landmarks which had floated away or were buried under ten feet of debris.

Clearing out books lately I came across my collection of papers and articles on Katrina, and I'm amazed at the simi-

larities to the faces and words that we see today in the media about the floods. I feel angry that in my short lifetime, I have lost the visual



Damage after recent flooding by Joann Thomas.

memories of both my past and my present. I cannot wait to return to Estes and the Park again! I'm reminded of the scientist James Lovelock and his Gaia hypothesis—the belief that the earth is a self-correcting organism. How much can it correct? When we include issues of construction, fracking, climate change, pine bark beetles, and natural disasters, are we asking

“Mother Earth” to do too much? What should our role be in this process?

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FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members

with one complimentary copy of our newsletter. Join us on the second Thursday of each month to find out more about FCAS. National dues do not cover the cost of producing the newsletter, so to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan*, please support your local chapter and subscribe to the newsletter. See the details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortnet.org/Audubon.

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

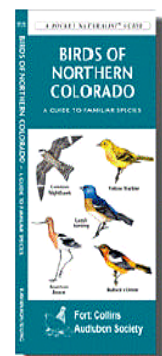
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



"Cherish, conserve, consider, create"

-- Lou Harrison (American composer: 1917-05-14—2003-02-02)

"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 which unites one family. All things are connected."

-- A Speech by Chief Seattle (Skokomish) in 1854

There's Just No Winning

So far there are just five realistic sources of alternative energy: geothermal, hydro power, nuclear, solar, and wind. It is this last source that has been getting a lot of attention in the recent past.

Like most evolving technologies, wind power has had some negative consequences—the magnitude of which has come to light only after the technology was well established. Perhaps the greatest consequence of wind energy development has been the collateral deaths of bird and bat populations, with both also being negatively impacted by a wide variety of other causes.

Winds found several hundred feet above the ground are typically stronger than those found lower; hence wind turbine towers are typically about 250 feet above ground. The 150-foot blades create a disk with a 300-foot diameter that extends from about 100 feet to about 400 feet above the ground. Anything flying through the disk runs the risk of making contact with one of the rotating blades.

In a recently released report, six U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists wrote that at least 67 Golden and Bald Eagles had been killed at wind energy facilities in the last five years. They fur-

ther wrote that wind farms in just 10 states have killed at least 85 eagles since 1997. The most deaths, 79, were Golden Eagles.

Mike Parr, vice president of the American Bird Conservancy, called the tally "an alarming and concerning finding."

The scientists said their figure is likely to be "substantially" underestimated because wind farm operators report eagle deaths voluntarily and only a fraction of those included in their total were discovered during searches for dead birds. Their study excluded the wind



Eagle fatality near base of wind turbine. File photo.

farms in California collectively referred to as Altamont Pass where turbines kill more than 60 eagles per year, making Altamont the deadliest place in the country for eagles.

Avian fatalities in wind farms are just estimates as there are never sufficient surveys done to accurately count deceased birds (or bats). Much of the evidence is removed from the scenes by scavengers, making accurate counts impossible. A newly published peer-reviewed study from Wildlife Society Bulletin reports U.S. wind turbines kill 1.4 million birds and bats every year.

The research was published in the Journal of Raptor Research.

Fort Collins Five-year Fracking Moratorium Initiative Gains Certification

The city clerk of Fort Collins has certified that there were enough signatures on an initiative sponsored by Citizens for a Healthy Fort Collins to place a five-year fracking moratorium ques-

tion on the November 2013 ballot.

The city council will have the option to either pass an ordinance adopting the language in the

Fracking continued on Page 4



Blue-footed Boobies

I promise that I will not write every column about the Ecuador trip, or the Galapagos Islands, which are to birders as Rome is to Catholics! Is there anything better than being able to walk up to your life's dream bird as he/she/it/ they stand at your feet with heads upraised wondering what are you doing here? I was ecstatic in the Galapagos. I would have suffered any hardship to get there.

As it turns, it is not such a hardship—well, except for the Zodiacs. I only did one split from raft to boat, which was quickly remedied by the awesome, careful, and attentive crewmen! How good were they? Well, after my first day hike on San Cristobal Island to see the Red-footed Boobies, I was warned that if I could not keep up, I would be taken back to the boat. Horrified, I told the guide, a young woman who obviously did not have a keen focus on customer service, that I was a guide in Rocky Mountain National Park and I'd never left anyone behind; however, the decision was up to her and she had to live with it. In my defense, I was slow because the hike was not just a walk, but a rock climb. My son helped, but it was slow and difficult, and I was always behind.

The regulations about visiting the islands are rigid, and our guide, a young woman whose family goes back to 1879 on the islands, was responsible for our behavior and the length of time we were on an island. And, yes, we even had a visit from the Sea Rangers to check the records for our boat. We Americans would rankle under

such tough scrutiny.

Did I get to the next island? You bet, Sol, our guide, told me that Carlos, a crewman, would accompany me and if I could not keep up, he would take me back to the boat. Carlos was a charm! He volunteered for the job, because he was new on the crew and had never visited the island yet. He was very careful to do a good job getting me over all rocks and quickly behind the end of the group.

The boobies—what a treat! They were at our feet, courting and



Blue-footed Boobies by Joann Thomas.

feeding young. The courting dance is something to behold. The male picks up one blue foot and waves it around, then puts its long spike of a beak up in the air as if ignoring the female. He then repeats the performance with the other foot. In return, she ruffles her wings out to acknowledge his efforts. He raises his beak higher and struts around very pleased—all of this right at our feet. We had to step around and over the nests and birds.

It is such a joy to experience a place where birds have no fear of humans whatsoever and just own the place. It was so gratifying and exciting and wonderful! I was reminded of the seven Big Horns in RMNP who had been hanging out at the Rock Cut in August and September. They were cautious, but unafraid, but not nearly as fearless as these boobies. Wildlife really owns the islands.

I will cherish this trip forever—and you may hear more about it!

Fracking continued from Page 3
initiative, or place the initiative on the November ballot. For more information contact Kelly Giddens, Campaign Organizer, 970-286-7974,

kellygiddens@me.com, or see Citizens for a Healthy Fort Collins, <http://www.healthyfoco.com/>.



Highlights of August and September FCAS Field Trips

By John Shenot

At Sylvan Dale Ranch on Aug. 25, a variety of flycatchers and hummingbirds were showing their stuff. The Sept. 8 monthly bird survey at Bobcat Ridge, led by Denise Bretting, was attended by nine people who were lucky enough to see over 50 species, including five Lewis' Woodpeckers, a flyover of 28 Pinyon Jays, and an abundance of Clark's Nutcrackers. Our other FCAS field trip, to Watson Lake, was unfortunately canceled due to the catastrophic rains and bridge closings.



September field trip highlight: Clark's Nutcracker in flight by Bob Gobeille.

Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Visit www.fortnet.org/Audubon for more information and updates. RSVP strongly encouraged.

Oct. 12, Saturday, 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 are welcome.

Oct. 19, Saturday, "All A-Bird" to Cottonwood Hollow Natural Area. Leader: John Shenot, johnshenot@gmail.com, 970-682-2551. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Running Deer parking area on East Prospect Road. Another chance to play Bird-O!

Nov. 10, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Meet at 7 a.m. See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey.

Dec. 8, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Meet at 7:30 a.m. See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey.

Costa Rica Birding Adventure

FCAS invites our membership to join Quetzal Tours in a birding adventure to Costa Rica, April 4-15, 2014. The tour will visit La Selva Biological Station, the Talamanca Mountains, Carará National Park, and the Tarcola River, led by master birding guide Noel Ureña. Expect



Snowcap
Photo: Noel Ureña

to see over 300 bird species including plenty of quetzals and macaws! The tour is limited to eight persons, and will raise funds

for FCAS. Request a detailed itinerary and register for the tour with Quetzal Tours (contact Nick Komar at info@quetzal-tours.com or call 970-449-3645).



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www.fortnet.org/audubon

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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 FCAS *Ptarmigan* by email

☐ **New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member** \$30
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☐ **Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member** \$750
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☐ **Additional Support for the FCAS Mission** \$_____

☐ **New NAS Member** \$20
Receive the NAS *Audubon* by mail

☐ **Renewing NAS Member** \$35
Receive the NAS *Audubon* by mail

Total Amount Enclosed: \$_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone # _____

Email: _____

May we send you FCAS email alerts if updates occur for field trips, programs etc.?

Yes or **No**

May we contact you if volunteer opportunities occur from helping at events to contacting legislators on important environmental issues?

Yes or **No**

Please make your tax-exempt check payable to **FCAS** and mail with this form to **FCAS, P.O. Box 271968, Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968**. Your cancelled check is your receipt. All renewals are due in January. New memberships begun after August 31st extend through the following year. Applications can be completed at www.fortnet.org/Audubon