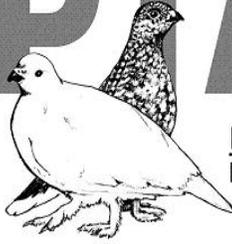


PTARMIGAN



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.

December 2013

Volume 44, Issue 9



December Potluck and Member Slideshow Program

Thursday, Dec. 12—Beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Drive

Presented by:

YOU, the members! Guests Invited too!

Our December program will be presented by those of you, our members and guests, who wish to share wildlife photos from your own photography collections in a slide show (please limit your slide presentation to 10 minutes). The Senior Center will provide the screen, digital projector, sound system—you bring your photos!

For the potluck, FCAS will provide coffee, tea,

and water. Those attending, please bring a dish to pass, your own place setting, and serving and eating utensils.

This is your opportunity to receive the applause! Join us at the Fort Collins Senior Center for this very special program meeting on Thursday, Dec. 12 starting at 6:30 p.m. And a Happy Holidays to all!



American Dipper by Ron Harden. Photos shown at the 2012 December Potluck.

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.

President's Corner

by Joann Thomas

How fast the year has flown! Reflecting on the past year of my life, I am amazed at the many things I've done. Reflecting on the past year of FCAS, I am amazed at the multiplicity of events and programs we have accomplished. This is not done without forethought and work. While facing many challenges of time and space, the board has continued to participate in events, to arrange programs, to keep field trips active, and to meet monthly. We face more challenges in 2014. We will be losing our conservation chair, Bill Miller; and our long time treasurer, John Waddell, is longing to spend more time traveling since he retired. I think his recent stay in Hawaii has truly spoiled him away from Colorado winters.

These two men have served long and hard for a combined 15-plus years. They deserve the rest they have chosen. So again we are seeking committed volunteers who would be able to meet the challenge of managing our conservation in-



terests and our finances. Not as easy task, I acknowledge, but a necessary one.

My volunteer life in Fort Collins has spanned 15 years, and working with FCAS as been the most rewarding. I invite you to join us. The positions we now have open are important and necessary. I ask you to consider making a commitment to FCAS. Meet great people while enjoying the fabulous outdoors that is Colorado!

Hospitality Volunteer Needed!

FCAS needs a volunteer to help with refreshments for our program meetings from January through May 2014. We supply funds for refreshments. The volunteer will set up the refreshment table by 7 p.m. and clean up after the meeting. You'll make everyone happy by serving goodies! Contact any board member at the next meeting or send an email to fortcollinsaudubonmembership@gmail.com to volunteer for this vital position.

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

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members



Margaret Grant
 Gretchen Johnson
 Paula and Ed Stearns

Thank You for Your Membership

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

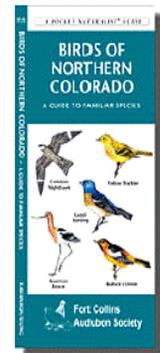
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



“The price of apathy toward public affairs is to be ruled by evil men.”

-- Plato

"At Christmas, play and make good cheer, for Christmas comes but once a year."

-- from *The Farmer's Daily Diet*, Thomas Tusser. Circa 1515-1580.

A Change In Course

I am a lover of quotes. Instead of developing my own profound statements, I prefer to use those composed by others that capture the essence of what I feel. This issue will be no different.

Perhaps my most favorite quote is from a 1968 speech made by the Senegalese environmentalist, Baba Dioum, to the general assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. His quote is derived from a Senegalese proverb.

"In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught."

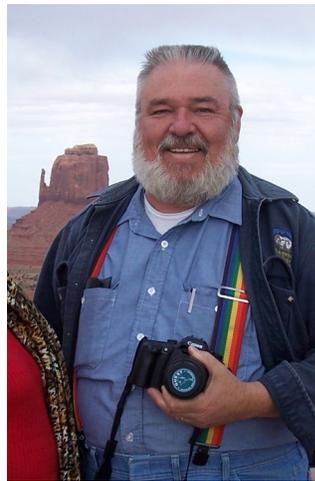
An explanation of this quote is found at: http://everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=1482909.

In the end we will conserve only what we love. “Perhaps the most vexing challenge identified by Dioum is that love itself is usually a higher order emotion most fully expressed when more basic needs for safety, shelter, and sustenance have already been met. On the most fundamental level, it's difficult to convince a subsistence farmer that reducing the nitrogen loading on the local estuary is more important than using chemical fertilizers on the crops that feed his family. We really do only conserve what we love, and at the most basic level most of us love ourselves, our family, our friends, and our community and beyond in expanding concentric circles of urgency and commitment.”

We love only what we understand. “Another intrinsic dilemma for environmentalism has always been that it demands a perspective that is broader than most people are capable of sustaining. Dioum's quote captures this problem perfectly. To some extent, this explains the difficulty of achieving significant strides on environmental issues that demand sacrifice and discipline beyond the borders of what we know and understand first hand.”

We will understand only what we are taught. “Dioum's inclusion of education in the equation is equally astute. One can only imagine the exas-

peration he must have felt during a long career grappling with the challenges of forging environmental policy within the context of the predominantly uneducated populace of many African countries. What may seem intuitively obvious to a literate westerner with even a rudimentary scientific education might be insurmountably arcane to an African farmer.”



Bill Miller at Monument Valley

Today we are faced with a myriad of environmental issues, all caused by our own actions. Perhaps the issue with the most dire consequences is the issue of global climate disruption followed by the ever increasing human population that drives virtually all environmental issues.

The leaders of our nations have missed, by years, the opportunities to address both issues and now the earth and all of its inhabitants, human and otherwise, will suffer the consequences of our inactions.

I have been writing president's and conservation chair's columns for well over a decade. Coupled with involvement with several other organizations, I have finally burned out and realize I must back off on some of my volunteer commitments and spend more time doing things with my wife and around the house, as well as pay more attention to our photography business.

I wish to remain involved with FCAS, both as a Director-at-Large and also as the chapter representative to the Audubon Colorado Council. On this note, I sign off as the FCAS Conservation Chair, but urge each and every one of you to remain informed on the issues of the day and, most importantly, give our elected officials an earful.



Blue Jay: A Pioneer Bird

Our strange weather pattern this winter is continuing—daytime temps almost 70 while five inches of snow predicted for overnight. And as I spend time in the yard longer into winter, I am conscious of a bird that I've not had before in any numbers: Blue Jays—raucous, as in loud, boisterous, and unruly. Yep, that's the bird!

I had thought it was a southern or back-east bird, then I found them in Fort Collins. I only saw them in Lee Martinez Park along the river and in the open fields—now, this year, here they are in my backyard. Looking at distribution maps reveals that year-round populations extend only to mid America. The maps show no population west of that line. Why then are they occurring with more and more frequency here? Climate change may encourage them, but they were here before we coined that phrase.

We, humans, have a role in the expanding distribution of Blue Jays. As pioneers moved across the country, settling on the prairies and bringing with them plants from back home, they created islands of vegetation for birds to use as shelter, food, and safety. Creating shelter belts to protect



Blue Jay by Nick Komar.

houses from prairie winds and wind breaks to prevent snow buildup on highways, added to the mix. Then the islands of vegetation on Interstate rest areas were the final addition to the vegetation highway that allowed birds like Blue Jays and Cardinals to arrive in Colorado.

The Blue Jay's diversified feeding habits allow it to range far and wide.

While its favorite food is acorns and seeds from trees, it also will feed on small dead or injured vertebrates, nestlings and/or eggs, and insects. They also cache food for later feeding. Both habits help the bird in its journey across the country.

Blue Jays build their nests in crotches of trees 10 to 25 feet above the ground. They

will use either deciduous or conifer trees. Spring time hopefully will bring a new nesting bird to my backyard in my 25 foot Blue Spruce. However, the Blue Jay will quickly abandon a nest if a predator approaches. Unfortunately, a neighborhood cat loves my yard. The cat terrorized the flicker nest in the lowest hole of my old crab apple tree almost leading to abandonment. I hope the Blue Jays will persevere. They are a gentle reminder of my deep southern roots.



Audubon Colorado Council Update

In October, the Audubon Colorado Council (ACC) held its first board meeting following months of discussion and organization.

Business of the meeting included:

- Approval of ACC bylaws formulated by chapter representatives at a meeting on March 2, 2013.
• Approval of a motion for ACC to support Audubon Society of Greater Denver in their opposition to an expansion of Chatfield Reservoir.
• Support for continuation of annual chapter dues in support of the legislative lobby.
• Support from chapters and/or individuals toward the estimated \$1,000 annual cost of running ACC.
• Developing a list serv that will facilitate discussion between chapters.
• Approval for ACC officers to serve until Spring 2016 elections.
• Setting a teleconference board meeting for next January or February.



Sign Up for the Christmas Bird Counts!

This year's 114th annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count will take place Dec. 14 to Jan. 5, 2014. The Fort Collins count is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 14 and will be coordinated by Tom Hall (redbear44@msn.com). The Loveland count will be on Wednesday, Jan. 1 and coordinated by Nick Komar (quetzal65@comcast.net). Contact



Tom or Nick if you want to participate in these fun events. Advanced birding skills are not required. Volunteers who just wish to record what comes to their backyard feeders also are welcome to participate. *Note:* The date of the Rawhide count had not been set as of our publication deadline. Check the FCAS website for updates.

Field Trip Leaders Needed

John Shenot, Field Trip Coordinator

The new year is right around the corner and I am once again/still looking for volunteers to lead field trips. I would like to schedule several 2014 trips well in advance and get them on people's calendars, so if you'd like to lead a trip in January or later in the year, please contact me (johnshenot@gmail.com). If you have previously contacted me, I would appreciate a reminder. Thanks!



Ring-billed Gulls, California Gull, and Lesser Black-backed Gull by John Shenot.

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.

Dec. 8, 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 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels are welcome.

Dec. 14, Saturday, Fort Collins Christmas Bird Count. See article on this page.

Jan. 1, Wednesday, Loveland Christmas Bird Count. See article on this page.

April 5-14, 2014, Costa Rica Birding Adventure. See announcement below. This is a professionally guided trip, organized by Quetzal Tours at very competitive rates. Quetzal Tours will make a donation to FCAS for each person who signs up.

Costa Rica Birding Adventure

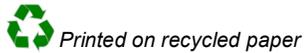
FCAS invites our membership to join Quetzal Tours in a birding adventure to Costa Rica, April 5-14, 2014. The tour will visit La Selva Biological Station, the Talamanca Mountains, Carará National Park, and the Tarcola River, led by master birding guide Noel Ureña. Expect to see over 300 bird species 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).



Tody Motmot
Photo: Noel Ureña



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



Membership Application

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

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member
Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member
Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail | \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member
Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email
or receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail | \$750 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Additional Support for Alex Cringan
Fund natural history education grants | \$ ____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New NAS Member
Receive the NAS <i>Audubon</i> by mail | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Renewing NAS Member
Receive the NAS <i>Audubon</i> by mail | \$35 |

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

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ ____

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