

# 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.

**January 2014**

**Volume 45, Issue 1**

## **Eastern Screech-Owl Citizen Science Program**

**Presented by:**

**Rob Sparks, Research Biologist, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory**

**Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014**

**Fort Collins Senior Center—1200 Raintree Dr.**

**Social Time: 7 pm; Program 7:30 p.m.**

Although the Eastern Screech-Owl is the most common owl species in North America it is poorly understood. There are no available population trends in Colorado and there is scarce quantitative information on how to conserve this species. It can serve as an indicator species for riparian forest health and as an umbrella species for the Poudre River urban corridor. Rob Sparks, research biologist with Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO), will speak on the Eastern Screech-Owl Citizen Program, which is the first phase of a long-term study to understand occupancy and occupancy dynamics of Eastern Screech-Owl populations along the Poudre urban ecosystem. The results will shed light on how Eastern Screech-Owls are using the Poudre River for breeding habitat, and also help

guide future management and restoration efforts along the river.

Before coming to RMBO in 2003, Rob worked in Costa Rica with the Great Green Macaw Conservation Project and the Arizona Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program. Rob is responsible for implementing study designs, managing spatial data, and creating distribution models. He has used generalized linear models to explore habitat relationships for wintering grassland birds in Mexico.

We invite you to join us on Jan. 9 at 7 p.m.

at the Fort Collins Senior Center for this informative presentation and learn more about citizen involvement in this monitoring program.

The program is free and the public is welcome!



**Eastern Screech Owl by Rob Sparks.**

## President's Corner

by Joann Thomas

A few good men and women—that is what we need if FCAS is to move forward to the future. The ballot, which will be voted on in January, is on Page 6 of this newsletter. Note the empty slots for which we have no candidate:

**President-elect:** The president-elect becomes president the following year. Not nearly as daunting as it sounds—you get to control the microphone! The best part is watching the birds; the worst part is worrying how FCAS will continue. If you believe FCAS will continue, we need you!

**Treasurer:** Someone has to balance the books. Believe me, that is not me. After viewing my math scores on my graduate entrance exam, the director of graduate studies asked me, “Can you even add?” But, there are people out there who know and love numbers. You know who you are and we need you!

**Conservation:** This chair stays aware of conservation issues and shares those issues with our membership, including what they mean to us here in Colorado. Bill Miller and Ron Harden are willing to help you. They are the FCAS issues gurus at present. The Audubon Society

was founded on conservation issues; awareness of these issues is the way to protect nature and save the birds. If you care, we need you!

**Hospitality:** We serve tea and cookies, but not for long if someone doesn't step up. Right now, I am president, education, and hospitality—but I cannot keep it up. If we do not create a plan for hospitality at the January meeting, we will have no tea, coffee, or cookies in the future. If you believe food is a necessary part of fellowship, we need you!

**Board member:** This is an open position for you to experiment with board membership and to find your niche in FCAS. Hildy Morgan, who is leaving due to health issues, joined the board and has been a steady contributor on many projects. Our March fund raiser is Hildy's idea and even though resigning from the board, she will continue to work for that event. If you feel like you need time to experiment, we need you!

Consider what your contribution can be, we need you!



**WE NEED YOU**

### FCAS CONTACTS

[Audubon@fortnet.org](mailto:Audubon@fortnet.org)

#### President & Education Chair

Joann Thomas

970-222-0741

[jthomas91@aol.com](mailto:jthomas91@aol.com)

#### Membership Chair

Liz Pruessner

970-484-4371

[fortcollinsaudubonmembership@gmail.com](mailto:fortcollinsaudubonmembership@gmail.com)

#### Field Trip Coordinator

John Shenot

970-682-2551

[johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com)

#### Program Chair

Jessie Meschievitz

[jmesch@slbbi.com](mailto:jmesch@slbbi.com)

970-686-1424

#### Newsletter Editor

Carol Jones

970-482-6295

[cjones@cowisp.net](mailto:cjones@cowisp.net)

For other FCAS contacts visit [www.fortnet.org/audubon/leadership.htm](http://www.fortnet.org/audubon/leadership.htm)



### FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

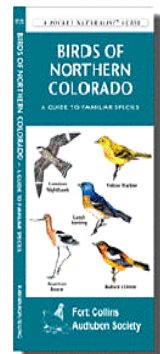
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



## Highlights of Recent Field Trips \_\_\_\_\_ by John Shenot

The Nov. 23 geese and ducks field trip thankfully came before December's deep freeze, and that allowed a group of eight people to enjoy lots of open water and a spectacular "wild goose chase." In addition to finding 11 duck species, we were lucky enough to find six—count 'em, six!—goose species in one morning: Canada Goose, Cackling Goose, Snow Goose, Ross' Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, and Brant.



Brant by John Shenot.

The Dec. 8 survey at Bobcat Ridge was also a big success, even though the six attendees had to endure frigid temperatures. The predator birds were out in force: three Golden Eagles, two Bald Eagles, a Red-tailed Hawk, two Rough-legged Hawks (rarely seen at Bobcat Ridge), a Prairie Falcon, and a Northern Shrike were observed.



### Upcoming Field Trips

*All field trips are free of charge (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](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon) for more information and updates. RSVP is recommended.*

**Jan. 12, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto: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.

**Jan. 18, Saturday, Lee Martinez Park.** Leader: John Shenot, [johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com), 970-682-2551. Not an early riser? Wonder why we never schedule field trips in the afternoon? It's because you usually see fewer birds in the afternoon. But, so what—this trip is for those who like to sleep in on Saturday! Meet at 1 p.m. in the parking lot at the east end of Elm Street, by the ball field and tennis courts. We'll see what

we can see—and then celebrate or commiserate at Scrumpy's hard cider bar in Old Town (optional, of course).

**Feb. 9, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Meet at 7:30 a.m. See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey.

**March 9, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Meet at 7:30 a.m. See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey.

**April 5-14, 2014, Costa Rica Birding Adventure.** See announcement on Page 7. This is a professionally guided trip, organized by Quetzal Tours at very competitive rates and a fundraiser for FCAS.

### Field Trip Leaders Still Needed

This is my last plea before summer 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 February or later in the year, contact me at [johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com). If you have previously contacted me I would appreciate a reminder. Thanks!





## Potluck and Carolina Wrens

With 2013 closing behind us and 2014 looming ahead of us, FCAS finished its year in grand style. We shared camaraderie and good conversation at our December potluck dinner and annual member slide show. It is fun to share the exciting nature adventures that our members have experienced!

Then Nick Komar mentioned a bird seen recently in Poudre Canyon and I felt a rush of warm memories. The words Carolina Wren bounced me back in time.

For about six years, I would spend several months on the Mississippi gulf coast and in coastal Louisiana twice a year. One year, a little brown bird began frequenting my front porch. Hiding behind the blinds, I watched as it flew away and returned repeatedly. Because it was carrying nesting material in its beak, I surmised that it was building a nest, but I had to return to Colorado before I could investigate.

On my return several months later, I found the most beautifully woven nest snuggled up against a ledge on the chimney. It had a dome over the nest and a small hole facing the chimney wall. Carefully removing the nest, I found several broken egg shells inside. Having missed the excitement of seeing the nest built to completion and of watching the hatching and fledging of the

chicks, I felt a sense of loss. Living in two places is both a blessing and a curse.

I wanted to save the nest, but did not think to retrieve it before leaving again for Colorado. Now I have mixed emotions—I discovered that the Carolina Wren will

reuse its nest, so it's a good thing to leave it; but after Katrina, the nest was gone. Somehow losing the nest became a metaphor for the loss of family and friends, relationships, and possessions that occurred during Katrina.

The Carolina Wren's Latin name is *Thryothorus ludovicianus*. Sensitive to cold, it is mainly a southern bird and according to *The Birds of North America Online*, it is non-migratory. Wikipedia

reveals it is the state bird of South Carolina; and, wonderfully enough, its specific name *ludovicianus* means "from Louisiana." The Poudre Canyon wren—a gift from my birth home to my chosen home.

So at the potluck dinner, when I heard the words Carolina Wren, I saw perfectly in my mind's eye that little bird's flitting energy and flicking tail. I thought of things discovered and things lost in life—life as a potluck experience!



Carolina Wren

---

## Spring Fling Seminar Day—March 29

Have you ever wondered why most species of birds migrate while others do not, or how something as simple as a feather can unlock a world of information for avian researchers? Perhaps you desire more information about the connection between our changing environment and birds, and want to know how you can make a difference in alleviating the stresses faced by birds on a daily basis.

The answers to these questions and more will be presented when the FCAS presents its Spring Fling, "The World of Birds," on March 29, at the Drake Center on Drake Road in Fort Collins from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dr. Charles Clarkson, professor of ornithology, ecology, and conservation at Roger Williams University, will be the featured speaker. Dr. Clarkson will discuss how the biology of birds has baffled scientists for years, the science behind feathers and flight, survival: a year in the life of a bird, how birds cope with a changing planet, and what can I do?: the power of one. For information and registration, please contact Hildy Morgan at [hildy.morgan@gmail.com](mailto:hildy.morgan@gmail.com) or 970.223.3493.



Dr. Charles Clarkson





Red-tailed Hawk

### FCAS Annual Membership Renewal

It is January and that means it is time to renew your annual membership!

Please use the form on the back page of the *Ptarmigan* newsletter to renew by mail or renew at a program meeting. You also can renew online at our website: [www.fortnet.org/audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/audubon).

Dues are \$20 to receive the *Ptarmigan* electronically or \$30 for a printed copy through the mail.

Your local chapter dues make possible our programs, meetings, education, and advocacy for birds and wildlife habitat.

Remember, your membership and contributions are tax deductible.

Keep the *Ptarmigan* coming by renewing today. We appreciate your support and thank you to all.

### Thank You New and Renewing Members

Donald Beaver  
Monica Brewer  
Kate Carr  
Kevin McCartney  
Judith Putnam  
Leslye and Larry Sherman

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



PTARMIGAN

## Looking Ahead to

### Colorado's 2014 Legislative Session

The upcoming legislative session is not expected to have much to benefit wildlife. Some legislative activity is expected, both negative and positive, that would affect in-stream water flows. Another attempt is expected to try to press the federal government to turn over public lands to the state.

Bills to watch include: 1) One that could come with a provision to give additional funding for the proposed and environmentally-damaging Chatfield Reservoir in Chatfield State Park. 2) An off-road vehicle group is pushing for a bill that could increase illegal trails on public lands. 3) Another bill being considered would require the oil and gas industry to follow more health and safety standards for equipment within flood plains.

The Audubon Colorado Council's Public Policy Committee, with our lobbyist's help, will learn more specifics regarding bills when the session starts in January and will prioritize which issues to follow.

### Come to the 2014 Legislative Forum

Come to the 2014 Legislative Forum on Saturday, Feb. 22 to meet other activists and learn about the hot environmental topics that our state legislators are considering. The Forum will be held at First Plymouth Church, 3501 S. Colorado Boulevard, Denver (SW corner of Colorado and Hampden), from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

After the continental breakfast, our legislative liaison, Jen Boulton, will review the session's important environmental bills, followed by speakers who will provide background on issues like water, fracking, and wildlife. Legislators are always invited to speak on an after-lunch panel, which gives you a chance to meet and engage them.

The final agenda will be available shortly before the meeting on the Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD) website, [www.denveraudubon.org/programs/localfieldtrips](http://www.denveraudubon.org/programs/localfieldtrips).

The cost of the Forum is \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. You can register and pay online at the ASGD website. Alternatively, call the Audubon office at 303-973-9530, Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and send your check to: ASGD, 9308 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Littleton, CO 80128.

We can always use help with setup and cleanup; if you are interested in volunteering, mention this when you register and be sure to leave a contact phone number.

[www.fortnet.org/audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/audubon)

Page 5



## FCAS Upcoming Chapter Elections and Slate of Officers for 2014-2015

The FCAS Board of Directors is identifying chapter members to serve on the board for 2014. Please consider taking a role—vacancies are listed below. For more information, please contact Joann Thomas at [jthomas91@aol.com](mailto:jthomas91@aol.com) or at 970-222-0741.

**Officers and Directors:** President, Joann Thomas; Vice-President, Louise Parker; Secretary, Scott Cobble; Treasurer, VACANT; Directors-at-large, Barb Adams, Susan Cottingham, Ron Harden, John Shenot, Bill Miller. One Director-at-large position, VACANT.

**Standing Committee Chairs:** Conservation, VACANT; Education, Joann Thomas; Field Trips, John Shenot; Finance, VACANT; Membership, Liz Pruessner; Programs, Jessie Meschievitz; Public Relations, Louise Parker; Hospitality, VACANT.

**Special Committee Chairs:** Scholarship: Louise Parker; Volunteer Coordinator, VACANT; Email Serv, VACANT; ACC Delegate, Bill Miller; ACC Alternate Delegate, Joann Thomas.

**Contract Members:** Newsletter, Carol Jones; Webmaster, Scott Miller.

**GET INVOLVED**  
Be a volunteer and reap the rewards

### December Sightings



Townsend's Solitaire by Georgia Doyle.

On right, Eastern Bluebird, in the uncommon dark phase, by Georgia Doyle. A rare sight in Larimer County.



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](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon).



Above, Rough-legged Hawk by Georgia Doyle.

On right, Merlin by Nick Komar.



## 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](mailto:info@quetzal-tours.com) or call 970-449-3645).



Tody Motmot  
Photo: Noel Ureña



Resplendent Quetzal

Noel U.

**All photos by Noel Urena.**

Top right: Scarlet Macaw

Lower right: Resplendent Quetzal

Top left: Tody Motmot

Lower left: Snowcap



Snowcap  
Photo: Noel Ureña



PTARMIGAN

[www.fortnet.org/audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/audubon)

Page 7

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



Printed on recycled paper

### Membership Application

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

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member</b>                        | \$20    |
| Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email   |         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member</b>                        | \$30    |
| Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail  |         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member</b>                               | \$750   |
| Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email<br>or receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail |         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Additional Support for Alex Cringan</b>                        |         |
| <b>Fund natural history education grants</b>   | \$_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>New NAS Member</b>   |         |
| Receive the NAS <i>Audubon</i> by mail   | \$20    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Renewing NAS Member</b>  |         |
| 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](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon)