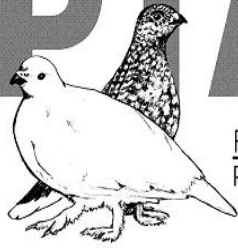


PTARMIGAN



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 2014

Volume 45, Issue 6

**Karen Green, Executive Director
Zoological Discovery Center**

Presents

“Exploring Amphibians and Reptiles”

Thursday, Sept. 11

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

You are invited to get up close and personal with a variety of reptiles and amphibians as you learn interesting facts, have myths debunked, and get a chance to ask questions. Karen Green, Executive Director of the Zoological Discovery Center, will present this program and will bring live species, including those native to Colorado. Karen Green also serves as a Steering Committee

Member for the Colorado Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation and is a member of the



Tiger Salamander by Karen Green.

American Association of Zookeepers.

The Zoological Discovery Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and sparking a passion for the conservation of wildlife by providing a chance to connect with our animals like never before. Its philosophy is a hands-on approach to wildlife conservation and education.

Join us on Sept. 11 at the Fort Collins Senior

Center for this educational, interactive program. This program is free and open to the public.

Welcome Back FCAS and New National Members!

We welcome new National Audubon Society members by sending one issue of our newsletter. 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, so if you'd like to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan*, please subscribe on the last page of this newsletter or at www.fortnet.org/Audubon.

President's Corner

The hiatus of summer has allowed the FCAS Society board to brain storm about the future of the society. We found that FCAS does many things well: our program meetings, our newsletter, and our field trips.

FCAS is a healthy organization and we are proud of having brought it to this place. We host program meetings that draw 75 to 100 people, have a healthy bank account, publish an attractive and informative newsletter, have had a fantastic slate of field trips, and participate in numerous local activities. The name of Audubon is respected in the community.

However, it is definitely time for the leadership of the board to include new creative, energetic people who care about habitat, birds, animals, and issues. The FCAS board should continue to reflect the dedication and commitment that has made us successful.

We sincerely hope there are people in our membership who are willing to step forward to participate in that leadership into the future. We look forward to hearing from you!



FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members



Debora Busse
Odell Dehart
Ann Donoghue
Pat Hayward
Paul W. Husted
Joyce Jones
Carol L. MacLean
Margaret Nalls
Dr. Paul A. Opler
Susan Quinlan
Iliana Quintero
Mary Lou Selch
Frank Stermitz
Mary Stonaker
Timothy Wexler



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

FCAS CONTACTS

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Membership Chair

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Program Chair

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Newsletter Editor

Carol Jones
970-482-6295

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

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

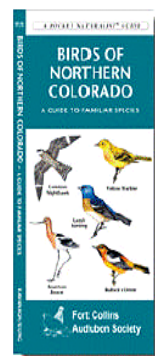
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



The Three Rs of Conservation

Conservation is our responsibility—it’s something we can do every day at home and at work. There are several ways we can all help decrease our environmental footprint while increasing conservation and saving money.



“Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle” are the three Rs of conservation. Americans throw away billions of cans, bottles, and jars every year in addition to packaging materials. Unfortunately most of these

items end up in landfills or dumps, where it can take hundreds of years for them to decompose. According to www.FactMonster.com, “Glass has been found in perfect condition after 4,000 years in the Earth!”

Reducing consumption produces less waste. If you don’t need an item, don’t purchase it. If you need an item but won’t use it often, see if you can borrow it. Other ways to reduce consumption include paying bills and reading newspapers and magazines online, printing only when necessary (at home and at work), and asking to be removed from junk mail/advertising lists. Turn off lights



at home and work when you leave a room, and turn off the faucet while brushing teeth.

Composting will benefit both you and the environment. Set aside a spot where you can discard certain food and plant

materials to decompose. Compost enriches the soil in yards and gardens. A good source for composting basics is www.gardenofoz.org.

Reuse cloth bags at the grocery and other stores. They’re sturdy and last for years, plus you’ll be saving trees. Place several sacks on the front seat or inside door panel in your car so

they’re always with you wherever you go. For school or work lunches, use plastic and glass containers, or reusable lunch bags. Also, don’t throw away shoe boxes or plastic food tubs as they make handy, stackable storage containers for craft or other loose items around the house or work.

Donate unused clothing, shoes, toys, electronics, furniture, or other items you don’t need or want. There are many places to drop off items and some organizations even schedule pickups, especially for larger items. As a bonus, you can deduct these items on your taxes.

Have a garage sale and make some extra cash, or give unused items to friends and relatives. Check out flea markets or swap meets.

Remember, it’s not only important to recycle items like paper bags, newspapers, aluminum cans, glass bottles, milk cartons, and cardboard, but it’s also important to



purchase items made from recycled materials. Most residential garbage services offer recycling bins that you can place out alongside your regular trash container for weekly curbside pickup.

We only have one Earth—let’s conserve it. As children head back to classrooms to learn the three Rs of reading, writing, and arithmetic, it’s time for all of us to learn and practice the three Rs of conservation—reduce, reuse, and recycle.



Think.



Act.



Save.

- C O N S E R V E U G I -



The Bucket List Bird

Ever have an elusive bird—the one that never is or was? My missing bird is the puffin. No it's not in Colorado, but I have been fascinated with the bird for years. Even took a trip to Maine, but the weather set in and the boat's engine broke and the captain got sick—well, you get the idea. No puffin.

Then I visited the Denver Museum of Nature and History on a Kevin Cook field trip and there it was in all its full dried-up glory on a stick. Well, it was a puffin. The colors become dulled when the birds are processed, but it was a puffin.

Three species of puffin inhabit the two oceans: Tufted and Horned Puffins in the Pacific and Atlantic Puffin in the Atlantic. My search has focused on the Atlantic; will catch the others on an Alaskan odyssey.

That very colorful beak is reserved for the mating season. The outer parts of the beak are shed after the necessities are done, leaving a smaller and duller beak. Their short wings compete with the hummingbirds in flaps per minute—up to 400 times per minute while flying low over the ocean's surface.



Atlantic Puffin

Good parents they are with the male building the nest in soft soil tunnels or rabbit burrows. One egg is laid in the burrow that is lined with grass, leaves, and feathers. Both parents incubate the egg and feed the chick that fledges at night to spend the first few years of its life at sea. It returns about five years later to breed.

Iceland contains most of the Atlantic puffins with 10 million individuals. The largest colony is in the Westmann Isles and contains 1.1 million nests, with four million individuals. These quantities guarantee that there will be hunting and puffin meat is on most hotel menus in Iceland along with puffin hearts as appetizers. Ugh!



Pacific Puffins

Ugh! And that beak, that magnificent beak! It hinges so that it can be clamped shut at multiple angles to enable the bird to carry several whole small fish instead of eating and then

regurgitating food for the young. It is a creature of land and sea with the freedom to live, nest, raise its young, and spend years at sea. What more can a person, oops, puffin ask for!

The puffin heart appetizers notwithstanding, I think the next bucket item crossed off my list is going to be puffin nesting season in Iceland!

Call for Volunteers

FCAS is again proud to be a sponsor of the Northern Colorado Nature Festival, previously the Birding Fair. Last year we were cancelled by the devastating floods of September. This year we are in a new site, Nix Farm, and have expanded our scope to include all of the magnificent facets of nature and our participation therein. There will be music, food, and lots of activities for the kids. Free parking and shuttle available!

Call Joann Thomas, 970-222-0741, to help at the FCAS tent with setup, talking to visitors, helping with craft, and cleaning up!

Date: Saturday, Sept. 27
Time: 7 a.m. bird walks until 3 p.m.

Check out the county's website for more information and a daily schedule of events: www.larimer.county/naturalresources/nature_festival.htm or hy-oung@larimer.org for more information.



Highlights of Summer Field Trips

by John Shenot

FCAS sponsored nine well-attended field trips between our May and September program meetings. For highlights and photographs from the May 17 trip to Gateway Natural Area, the May 23 trip to Phantom Canyon Preserve, the May 31 trip to Sylvan Dale Ranch, and the June 8 monthly survey at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area, visit the FCAS's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety>).

A few highlights from the other trips include:

June 14, Sunrise Ranch: Fifty-three species in four hours, great views of Yellow-breasted Chats, Hermit Thrush, Lincoln's Sparrow, lunch from the Ranch's culinary academy.

June 18, Soapstone Prairie Natural Area: Prairie Falcons feeding four chicks on a nest, abundant wildflowers, Rock Wrens, Sage Thrasher.

June 21, Pawnee National Grasslands: Huge numbers of sphinx moth caterpillars, Burrowing Owls, Loggerhead Shrikes feeding young on a nest, Orchard Oriole, Brown Thrasher.

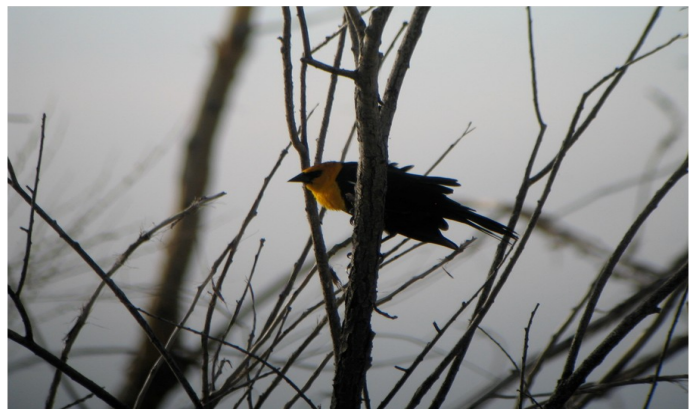
July 13, Bobcat Ridge Monthly Survey: Fifty-three species including Rufous Hummingbird, Lewis' Woodpecker, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak.

August 10, Bobcat Ridge Monthly Survey: Yellow-bellied Racer (snake), Wolf Spider, and 72 bird species including Black-chinned Hummingbird, Red-naped Sapsucker, Hammond's Flycatcher, Plumbeous Vireo, MacGillivray's Warbler.

As the chapter's field trip coordinator, I greatly appreciate all of the volunteers and organizations that hosted or led field trips for our members this summer: Bob Righter, Jon Prescott and the Nature Conservancy, Sylvan Dale Ranch, Denise Bretting, Michael Costello and the Sunrise Ranch, Sue Kenney, Aran Meyer, the City of Fort Collins, David Wade, and Bill Miller. Thank you all!



Yellow-bellied Racer at Bobcat Ridge by Cole Wild.



Yellow-headed Blackbird at Cottonwood Hollow Natural Area by John Shenot.



Wolf Spider at Bobcat Ridge by David Wade.



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 for more information and updates. RSVP is recommended.

Sept. 14, 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 are welcome.

Sept. 20, Saturday, Grandview Cemetery. Leader: Dave Leatherman, daleatherman@msn.com. Reservation required; space is limited to 20. Contact Dave to reserve a space. Meet at 8 a.m. at the entrance to the cemetery (west end of Mountain Ave). Dave will share his deep knowledge of this urban oasis and lead the search for resident birds and fall migrants.

Oct. 11, Saturday, Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Leader: Aran Meyer, City of Fort Collins Biologist. Reservation required; space is limited to 12. To reserve a

space on this special trip, contact John Shenot, johnshenot@gmail.com, 970-682-2551. Soapstone Prairie is a local treasure encompassing 28

square-miles of remote country and uninterrupted scenery. These nearly pristine grasslands are home to many species of wildlife, such as pronghorn, elk, swift fox, burrowing owls and golden eagles, and rare and threatened plants. Note: Participants should be prepared for wilderness conditions (no services), lots of walking, and potentially harsh weather conditions. This trip will begin on-site at 9 a.m. and end at approximately 2 p.m. Additional details for those who make a reservation.



Western Grebe by John Shenot.

Oct. 12, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird

Survey. Meet at 7 a.m. See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey.

Guatemala—Tikal Excursion, Nov. 22 - 30

This November, join fellow Auduboners in experiencing the mystique of Guatemala's highland volcanoes and rainforests at the breathtaking Mayan ruins of Tikal National Park. Quetzal Tours is offering an eight-day, relaxed-pace birding and nature photography adventure, led by Guatemala's premier bilingual birding guides, Knut Eisermann and Claudia Avendaño, authors of the *Aves de Guatemala*, an Annotated Checklist. Not only will this be a



Keel-billed Toucan
by Claudia Avendaño.

unique experience at a low price (just \$2,100 per person), but the event also serves as a fundraiser for FCAS. Visit locations such as Los Tarrales Reserve and Antigua, as well as Tikal. Expect to see Toucans, Motmots, Trogons, Woodcreepers, Sabrewings, and hundreds of other species in the land of the Mayan indigenous peoples. The tour is limited to six people. For more information, contact Nick Komar at info@quetzal-tours.com, or 970-449-3645.



Help Preserve Open Spaces Ballot Issue in November Election

By Linda Stanley with Bill Miller

Nearly 20 years ago, the citizens of Larimer County voted overwhelmingly to protect the open spaces of Larimer County by approving the Help Preserve Open Spaces one-quarter cent sales tax. In 1999, voters again overwhelmingly continued this tax.

Since then much has been accomplished, and the open space programs of Larimer County and its cities and towns are incredibly popular with citizens. The acquisition of the lands along the south shore of Fossil Creek Reservoir, location of some FCAS field trips, was made possible in part due to the county's Open Space Tax revenues.

It's now time to continue this program into the future by voting "Yes" on the Help Preserve Open Spaces ballot issue on this November's ballot. This is not a tax increase; it simply extends the current one-quarter cent sales tax (not on food and prescription drugs) 25 years past 2018.

A yes vote on this issue will help ensure that Larimer County and its cities and towns can continue to: preserve natural areas and wildlife habitat; protect lands along rivers, lakes, and



Larimer County Open Space.

streams; provide trails, and bird and wildlife watching, and other recreation opportunities; keep our current open spaces and natural areas well-managed; and protect working farms and ranches.

The ballot measure includes the following key provisions:

1. Revenues may only be spent for purposes spelled out in the ballot language (i.e., open lands related). Spending also is guided by the Larimer County Open Lands Master Plan.

2. Just like the original Help Preserve Open

Spaces initiative, the revenues are shared with the cities and towns of Larimer County. In this measure, 50 percent of the revenues are kept by the County and the remaining 50 percent are split between Larimer County's cities and towns according to their sales tax generation and population.

3. The splits between acquisition, improvements, and management also have changed to reflect the more mature program of Larimer County. Over the life of the renewed tax, a full 35 percent are required to be spent on acquisition and restoration, 50 percent must be spent on management and improvements (e.g. trails and trailheads) of county-owned open spaces, and 15 percent may be spent on either of these. Early on, more revenues are likely to be put toward acquisition while later, more money will be needed for management.

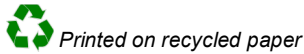
4. As in the past, the Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board will advise on how the County's portion of revenues should be spent. This board is made up of citizens appointed by the county commissioners with geographic representation substantially in proportion to population and sales tax generation.

The FCAS Board wholeheartedly endorses the passage of this measure to continue protecting our quality of life and providing for protection of habitat in support of wildlife and outdoor recreation, including birding. We urge our members to vote "yes" and to lend their support to this campaign. Volunteers and financial resources are needed to ensure passage of this ballot issue. Please visit

www.HelpPreserveOpenSpaces.org to donate and/or volunteer. For additional information contact Linda Stanley at 493-7225 or at orangewoman@hotmail.com, or email info@helppreserveopenspaces.org.



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:

- New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member** \$20
 Receive the FCAS *Ptarmigan* by email

- New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member** \$30
 Receive the FCAS *Ptarmigan* by mail

- Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member** \$750
 Receive the FCAS *Ptarmigan* by email
 or receive the FCAS *Ptarmigan* by mail

- Additional Support for Alex Cringan**
Fund natural history education grants \$_____

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

- Renewing NAS Member**
 Receive the NAS *Audubon* 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