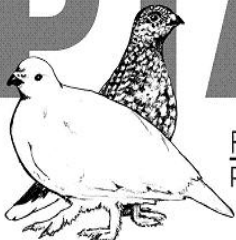


PTARMIGAN



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.

March 2015

Volume 46, Issue 3

Dr. SueEllen Campbell

Professor of English, Colorado State University

**“Science, Culture, and Natural Landscapes:
Researching and Writing *The Face of the Earth*”**

Thursday, March 12

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr

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

Dr. SueEllen Campbell states that her book, *The Face of the Earth*, “took 10 years to write, not least because it is not so easy to integrate scientific, cultural, and personal perspectives into a readable narrative—much less when you want to write about many major landscape types.” Dr. Campbell will discuss the types of research and writing decisions this project entailed, and will show slides of some art that she wished could have been included in the book.

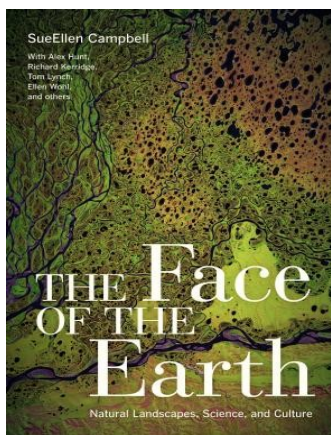
SueEllen Campbell is a professor of English at CSU, where her teaching focuses on the literature of nature and the environment. In addition to her most recent book, *The Face of the Earth*, she has written several books about our relationship with the natural world, including *Even Mountains Vanish: Searching for Solace in an Age of*

Extinction and *Bringing the Mountain Home*.

She is co-director of Changing Climates @ CSU, a multidisciplinary education and outreach initiative, and her work includes running a website for non-specialist adults called 100 Views of Climate Change (<http://changingclimates.colostate.edu/>).

Copies of the *The Face of the Earth* will be available for purchase at this program. Join us on March 12 at the Fort Collins Senior Center to learn about the creation of this book that “sweeps across dramatic and varied terrains—volcanoes and glaciers, billabongs and canyons, prairies

and rain forests—to explore how humans have made sense of our planet’s marvelous landscapes.” This program is free and the public is welcome.



FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending one complimentary copy of our newsletter. To learn more about FCAS, join us at one of our programs that are held September through May on the second Thursday of the month. If you’d like to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan*, please subscribe. See the details on the last page of this newsletter or at www.fortnet.org/Audubon.

President's Corner

by John Shenot

This is my second President's corner column. Last month I told you a little about myself and how I got interested in birding. This month, with those formalities out of the way, I initially thought I would use this second column to share my vision for FCAS with you. Hit the ground running—that sort of thing. Sounds riveting, doesn't it?

Now don't get me wrong. I do have some grand and not-so-grand ideas about what I think a local Audubon chapter can or should be, and now that I'm in this position of leadership I can strive to realize that vision. After all, as president I'm expected to have a vision and I'm supposed to rally the organization around my vision, right? In fact, if I had ever bothered to read one of those books about leadership and managing an organization, I presume that's what it would have said. (That, or something about colorful parachutes or moving cheese.)

The good news for all of you is that I had second thoughts. I decided that my vision can wait for some future newsletter, or maybe I will spare you altogether. What I want to do instead

What do you think?

is encourage you—each one of you—to share your own vision for FCAS with me. I would love to hear from you, preferably by email, about what you think FCAS does well, what we could do better, what we should do more of or less of, and maybe even what we don't do well. The suggestion box is open. Constructive criticism is welcome. I hope to hear your ideas!

Become a Citizen Scientist!

Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory is seeking volunteers to monitor Eastern Screech Owls along the Poudre River in Fort Collins. Data gathered will help in habitat conservation efforts along the river. The project runs from early March to late May and involves some night surveys.



Screech Owl

Training: March 4

**RSVP: Rob Sparks, 970-482-1708, ext. 19
or rob.sparks@rmbo.org.**

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



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Conservation Gardening

March in Colorado—time to think about readying gardens for spring planting. This year, consider going green with conservation gardening, which uses sustainable practices to help conserve natural resources while creating welcoming habitat for many types of wildlife.

Conservation gardening promotes the well-being of native ecosystems by shifting the focus from egocentric to a more holistic viewpoint. Any type of garden can be cared for in a sustainable manner, but there are some basics you'll need to know.

Gardens begin with soil. Healthy soils grow healthy plants, which are better able to resist disease and insect damage. While native plants are adapted to local conditions and can be grown with minimal soil amendment, many areas have

soils requiring improvement. The use of compost, mulch, and water feeds microbes and other living organisms within the soil. These organisms feed on organic matter, breaking it down and supplying vital nutrients to plants.

Compost can be made from yard and kitchen waste, providing a sustainable source of organic matter that reduces the need for additional fertilization. If additional fertilizer is required, choose organic sources such as aged manure or fish-based products. Composting also means less waste in landfills.

Mulching improves water retention, reduces weeds and weeding, provides insulation for plant roots in both summer and winter, and inhibits certain diseases. No need to purchase expensive bags of mulch. Nature provides plenty of mulch material free of charge in the form of leaf compost. Even if you don't have mature trees to pro-

vide leaves, many cities offer free mulch. The City of Fort Collins offers free mulch at two locations: 1702 Riverside Avenue and 2145 Centre Avenue (The Gardens on Spring Creek). Fort Collins' Leaf Exchange Program also offers a "free web-based program that connects people who need to get rid of leaves with those who need leaves for composting."



Sustainable garden from nocostl.com.

Whereas mulching is one of the most beneficial practices gardeners can use for better plant health, over-mulching can create a host of problems. Over-mulching can smother plant roots causing root rot and can create excessively moist areas which attract unwanted pests like slugs and snails as well as harmful diseases.

Plants need water, and conserving this precious resource is

important. Drip irrigation is ideal for vegetable and flower gardens, reducing water usage up to 50 percent. Drip irrigation also helps keep fungi in check and reduces evaporation. Group plants with similar water needs together on the same soaker hoses. If you water by hand, water early in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler and winds are low.

Conservation gardening provides healthy, vibrant ecosystems and is one of the most effective practices to follow. Research shows that gardening lessens stress and improves mental health. It's a low maintenance, eco-friendly method of growing healthy foods and creating beautiful landscapes that also provide habitat for wildlife. You'll not only reap the benefits of knowing where your food comes from, you'll derive a greater sense of community while lessening negative impacts on our planet.



What Did You See Last Weekend?

Last weekend was the Great Backyard Bird Count and I spent both Friday and Saturday mornings counting birds. Habitat and weather conditions varied at the two sites I visited. Friday morning was warm and calm, a grand and glorious birding day at Nix Farm, the city's natural areas' headquarters. The birds had lots of



White-crowned Sparrow by Bill Miller.

cover around the bird feeders; behind the farm house was a large pond. Several people were there with us, counting and watching the birds of early spring. There were 20 species of birds. Mixed in with adults were first-year juveniles, so identifying the species was lots of fun. A multiplicity of apps or books often helps find the ideal picture that clearly IDs a bird.

Saturday morning was very different: overcast, windy, and chilly. We were at the Gardens on Spring Creek, just behind the main building by the shelter. We were by a bird feeder, but no birds visited it. As we talked about why, we realized there was no shelter of shrubs as there had been at Nix Farm. In search of birds we walked north toward Spring Creek where we found birds high in the trees along the creek. There we found fewer species, which appeared to be mostly the same as those we'd found earlier in the morning.

I confess that I am a fair weather birder. While I found Friday just a splendid day, I bailed from the Gardens after one hour. Too cold and windy for me, but my partner stayed an hour longer. That made the difference in the count. Our list for the site doubled in that one

hour. On Friday, we saw all the species in the first hour and a half with repeats all morning adding to the numbers; on Saturday, my partner doubled the number of species by staying the extra hour. Was it the weather or lack of cover? I don't know, but I do know that, in addition to "the early bird catches the worm," "the relentless bird finds more worms."

We had no surprises in species, but we were surprised at the extent of spring courtship behavior that was occurring in the middle of February. Also, we were surprised at the number of flowers beginning to bloom. What does it bode for the summer? I don't know, but I do know that if migration takes off early, sudden snow storms can wreak havoc. Several years ago, I received a caged blue bird to care for from a man who found it and was leaving town. On calling Kevin Cook to ask how to care for it, I learned it was pretty hopeless and indeed the bird died about two hours after I got it. Kevin told me to freeze it and to take it to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science for their collection.

The bird is still in my freezer. Hmmm! A great prompt for a trip to the museum to view the collection. It's an educational experience you'll never regret. Look for details in next month's newsletter!

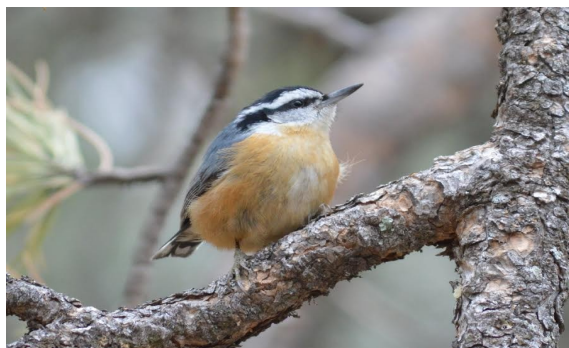


**American Woodcock at Bobcat Natural Area
by Andy Goris—a first sighting in many
years in Larimer County.**



A Pitch for Field Trips — by John Shenot

I've found that lots of birders are introverts. Many of us don't usually go for "group activities." We are more content to go where we want to go, when we want to go, move on if we are bored, and leave when we've had



Red-breasted Nut Hatch by Georgia Doyle.

enough. Some might even feel insecure around more experienced birders, or the opposite—like it's tiresome to help beginners find and identify birds. If any of this sounds familiar, you might wonder why on earth you would sign up for a FCAS field trip.

So here's my sales pitch: first, field trips are a way to meet and spend time with like-minded people. FCAS is a society; there is a reason you joined and presumably you wanted to be part of a society. Birding can be a great social activity. Secondly, it is often the case that a group of people will find birds that might be overlooked by an individual. While you are staring at a bush waiting for a

sparrow to re-emerge, you may have no idea that an accipiter just buzzed over head. But if you are in a small group of birders, the chances are good that people are looking in different directions and seeing different things. Finally, we can all learn from one another. I "led" a field trip last spring to Phantom Canyon Preserve, and I enjoyed helping some people less experienced than I learn about area birds. But at the same time, I think half of the attendees (or more) knew far more than I did about plants and wildflowers, and I learned as much as anybody that day! I hope to see you on one of our future field trips!

Upcoming Field Trips

March 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 are welcome.

March 14, Saturday, Running Deer and Cottonwood Hollow Natural Areas. Leader: John Shenot, johnshenot@gmail.com, 970-682-2551. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the Running Deer parking lot on Prospect Road.

April 5, Sunday, Loveland Lakes. Leader: Nick Komar. The day will start at 8 a.m. at a location to be determined and last until approximately 4 p.m. We'll search the lakes in and around Loveland for waterfowl, gulls, and any migrants or rarities that might be in the area. This trip is limited to 10 people. Register at: quetzal65@comcast.net.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Barb Adams
Scott Baily
Donald Beaver
Robert Buderman
Debora Busse
Larry Caswell
Jeane Darst
Desk Essentials
Beth Dillon
Georgia Doyle
Rich Fisher
Bill Franzen
Ruth Grant
Vince Griesmer
Ron Harden

Kathleen Hardy
Richard Harness
Jane Hawk
Lynne Hull
Anne Hunsinger
Cynthia Jacobson
Nancy B. Jones
Tina Jones
Kristin Joy
Thomas Kleespies
Linda Knowlton
Nicolas Komar
Dave Landers
Connie Marvel
D. J. McKean

William H. Miller
Margaret Nalls
Dan & Linda O'Brien
Paul A. Opler
Claudia Louise Parker
Laurie Paulik
Christine & Joe Polazzi
Judith Sanborn
John Shenot
Doris Sumrall
Sandra Tinsman
Al Trask
Roger Wieck
Sandra Winkler



Thank you For your membership!



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

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