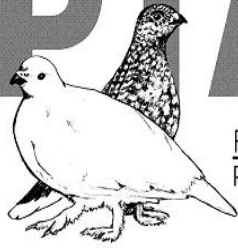


# PTARMIGAN



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.

May 2015

Volume 46, Issue 5

## Wally Van Sickle, Founder of IDEA WILD

### “The Front Lines of Conservation”

Thursday, May 14

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Drive

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

Through the work of IDEA WILD, 4,500 conservation projects have been made possible in over 100 countries around the world to minimize the loss of biodiversity. Wally Van Sickle, Founder of IDEA WILD, will speak about the philosophy of why biodiversity is important and the value of conservation. Through photos and his contacts throughout the developing world, he will tell inspiring stories of individuals working on the front lines of biodiversity conservation and how we can get involved in biodiversity conservation.

Wally has conducted wildlife research for the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Wyoming National Park Service Research Center, Mariah Environ-

mental Consulting Firm, Great Plains Wildlife Institute, the Smithsonian Conservation and

Research Center, and most recently the US Forest Service. Wally founded IDEA WILD in late 1991, inspired by volunteer work with wildlife researchers and conservation educators in Africa, Latin America, and Australia.

Wally's extensive travel has enabled IDEA WILD to remain in close contact with the specific needs of conservation projects in those regions



Green Turtle Release by Grupo de Trabajo en Tortugas Marinas del Golfo de Venezuela.

of high biodiversity.

Join us on May 14 at the Fort Collins Senior Center for an evening of photos and facts from the front lines of conservation. This program is free and open to the public.

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

## President's Corner

by John Shenot

This newsletter, delivered to you near the end of April or beginning of May, is the last newsletter FCAS will publish until the end of August. I don't need to tell you that during the coming four months spring migration will peak, many species will mate and fledge their young, and fall migration will begin. Just because FCAS takes the summer off doesn't mean the birds do!

For those of you who want to stay connected with FCAS, we have one more chapter meeting on May 14. Also, take a look at the field trips listed on Page 5. We'd love to see you out in the field! And once again I want to highly recommend that you "like" FCAS on Facebook. We will continue posting news and observations there throughout the summer, and we welcome your contributions (stories, questions, photos, etc.). You also may want to check our website (<http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon/>) periodically, as we hope to keep it updated all summer and to make some improvements.

Lastly, you might not know that the FCAS Board never rests! We meet monthly throughout the summer. If an issue arises that concerns



or excites you, something that you think needs FCAS attention that can't wait until September, please contact me or another one of our board members and we can add it to our agenda.

Happy birding, and have a great summer!

### Looking Ahead to "Barn Owls and Great Horned Owls"

After our summer break, Scott Rashid, Founder and Director of the Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute based in Estes Park, will present at our fall program on September 10. As a preview, consider watching a LiveCam hosted on the [www.carriep.org](http://www.carriep.org) website that will follow a pair of nesting Barn Owls at an undisclosed nearby Colorado site through the spring and summer. Scott will have copies of his newly released book, "The Great Horned Owl: An In-depth Study," at the September program for signing and sale. Mark your September calendars for this captivating program—you won't want to miss it!



Have a  
great  
Summer!

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### California's Drought: A Conservation Lesson for Colorado

In April, California Governor Jerry Brown imposed historic water control measures, mandating a water-use reduction of at least 25-35 percent in cities and towns throughout the state. Additionally, residential lawns must be replaced by drought-tolerant landscaping while golf



From [www.livescience.com](http://www.livescience.com).

courses and other public areas with greens must make significant cuts in water use. Brown's directive came more than a year after the governor had asked for a voluntary 20 percent reduction in water use, which many areas failed to achieve, and was announced as water officials measured the lowest April snowpack in more than 60 years in the Sierra Nevadas. Adding to concerns, NASA's Jay Famiglietti, Senior Water Scientist-Jet Propulsion Laboratory, predicted "California's drought may cause the state to run out of water completely by 2016." His prediction is based on California's only having "...about one year of water supply left in its reservoirs, and our strategic backup supply, groundwater, is rapidly disappearing."

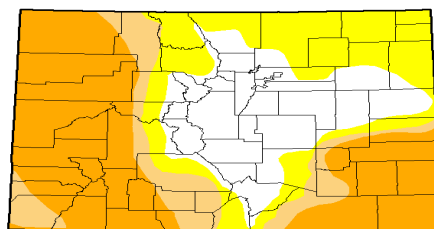
Drought in the West is not uncommon, but an article in the *Washington Post* by NASA researchers in conjunction with Cornell and Columbia Universities states today's drought in California and other regions of the U.S. Southwest "...pales in comparison with what's coming: a 'megadrought' that will grip that region and the central Plains later this century and probably stay there for decades. Thirty-five years from now, if the current pace of climate change continues unabated, those areas of the country will experience a weather shift that will linger for as long as three decades." Devastating news for the West, which may face major water shortages

coupled with the potential for monster wildfires.

Colorado's water supply has changed dramatically over the past decade with population growth, urbanization, drought, and agricultural needs. Wise water conservation is critical to ensure Colorado's water needs will be met in the future. No issue will have a bigger impact upon our state as the ability to manage our water effectively. Colorado's Water Plan is a start, but we must all learn to manage water wisely. Whether in a drought or not, water conservation makes good environmental sense.

As we head into summer, water conservation takes on greater emphasis. According to R. Wasikom and M. Neibauer, Colorado State University Extension Fact Sheet 9.952, "Water supply planners estimate that a typical household needs 0.4 to 0.5 acre-feet of water per year (approximately 150,000 gallons) to satisfy the typical demands of a home and lawn...Outdoor water use accounts

#### U.S. Drought Monitor Colorado



April 7, 2015  
(Released Thursday, Apr. 9, 2015)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D1	D1-D2	D2-D3	D3-D4	D4
<b>Current</b>	25.49	74.51	51.74	39.75	0.00	0.00
<b>Last Week</b> 3/31/15	32.22	67.78	51.74	39.75	0.00	0.00
<b>3 Months Ago</b> 1/6/15	69.07	30.13	21.26	12.26	0.00	0.00
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> 1/1/15	69.07	30.13	21.26	12.26	0.00	0.00
<b>Start of Water Year</b> 10/1/14	69.06	31.04	22.94	13.02	2.31	0.00
<b>One Year Ago</b> 4/8/14	39.38	61.62	23.40	15.06	6.90	1.47

**Intensity:**  
 D0 Abnormally Dry      D3 Extreme Drought  
 D1 Moderate Drought      D4 Exceptional Drought  
 D2 Severe Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

**Author:**  
Michael Brewer  
NCDC/NOAA

USDA      NOAA      NCEP      NWS  
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

for about 55 percent of the residential water use in urban areas along the Front Range. Many Colorado residents use over 170 gallons of water per capita per day. Water conservation is vital to enhancing the efficiency of how we use water."

California's plight should be a warning for Colorado. We need to learn from their mistakes and begin applying stronger water conservation measures now to avoid a similar fate. Wise water conservation may mean the difference between forced restrictions and shortages versus maintaining the quality of life we all love in Colorado.



Birding: Large and Small

As I write, we are facing four continuous days of cold and wet, rain mixed with snow; hail has already fallen. Days like this are my dream days. I think about the incredible birds I saw in Ecuador in 2013 and I dream about the incredible birds in my future in Antarctica, Asia, Africa, and the remaining continents on my bucket list.

I long to walk among the penguins in Antarctica. After recently seeing a television program about how the Gentoo Penguins nest around the



Gentoo Penguin and chicks.

Antarctica post office, I am ready to pack my long johns. Carefully planning the

trip to arrive when the chicks are at their most active intrigues me. Watching the feeding and squabbling of chicks, parents, and interlopers would be the height of birdwatching for me.

Studying Asia and Africa are exercises for long gloomy days like these. These are huge undertakings: the study, the planning, the actualizing, and the travel. This is surely the larger view of birding in my life.

In the midst of imagining these adventures, I remember sitting in the yard recently on one of our unseasonably warm days. As my friend and I talked, I became conscious of a small bird flying back and forth in front of us. Not my yearly flicker, smaller. As it flew by again, I focused on it—a house sparrow entering the dryer vent pipe. Hanging out of the pipe were scraps of something. Hmm, I thought, it's building a nest in my dryer vent. Horrors came to mind: hard-boiled chicks when I turned the dryer on? My friend went inside and turned the dryer on for 10 minutes on high heat to try to discourage the

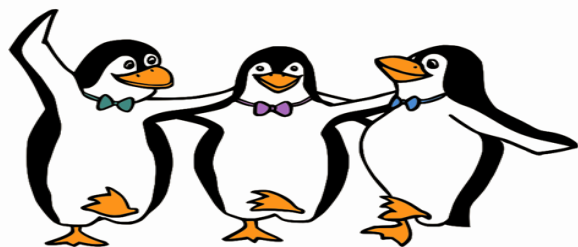
bird. Cavity nester—not house sparrows—would they?

The bird tried to fly up the pipe and was blown back by the hot air. It was definitely discouraged and we went to investigate. Ahh! The bird was not nesting in the pipe—it was taking accumulated lint for the nest it was building in my neighbor's tree.



House Sparrow by Bill Miller.

This whole episode kept us intrigued for an afternoon—watching the bird, and talking about birds and nests. After cleaning the vent pipe, we left the fallen lint for others to use if they needed it. Thinking of chicks nuzzling into my clothes' lint gave me a warm fuzzy feeling.



## 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.

**May 9, Saturday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com), work: 970-669-1185, home: 970-669-8095. Note that this survey is on Saturday and not Sunday as usual. 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.

**May 16, Saturday, Sunrise Ranch.** Leader: Michael Costello, [mcostello@emnet.org](mailto:mcostello@emnet.org). Sunrise Ranch is located in the foothills between Loveland and Masonville on CR 29. The ranch has a resident population of Wild Turkeys and great habitat for foothills specialty species. Take

hiking on moderately steep roads and trails will be necessary. An optional farm-to-table lunch will be available to all participants on a donation basis.



Pawnee Grasslands in bloom by Bill Miller.

**June 14, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Meet at 6:30 a.m. See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey.

**June 20, Saturday, Pawnee National Grasslands.** Leader: Bill Miller, [5mcorp@comcast.net](mailto:5mcorp@comcast.net), 970-493-7693. This field trip will leave from Fort Collins at 6 a.m. Contact Bill for details. The grasslands, 35 miles east of Fort Collins, are a world-class birding area. Join Bill for a special day in search of Burrowing Owls, Mountain Plovers, McCown's Longspurs, and Ferruginous Hawks. Carpooling is necessary. Please contribute \$3/person to your driver for fuel.

**July 12, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Meet at 6:30 a.m. See details above for this recurring, monthly survey.



Mountain Plover in the Grassland by Bill Miller.

advantage of this rare opportunity to explore a large private property with the ranch's Director of Operations (and fellow birder) Michael Costello. Meet at 7 a.m. at the dome parking lot on the left side of CR 29, approximately one mile from the intersection of CR 27 and CR 29. Some

### New Procedure for Some Field Trips

FCAS has been advised by our insurance agent that we need to ask anyone who volunteers to transport other people as part of our field trips to sign a form and show that they have a valid license and personal auto insurance. The field trip leader will bring copies of the necessary form. We apologize for the inconvenience and formality of this new procedure, but it is necessary to protect FCAS against damage claims should anything go wrong. This new procedure will only apply if the driver of the vehicle volunteers to carry passengers after the field trip begins; for example, when the field trip involves visiting multiple locations. Most FCAS field trips remain at one location and do not require the use of vehicles, so there won't be any paperwork for most of our field trips.



## Brazilian Birding Tour December 13-19, 2015

Discover the birds of Southeast Brazil's Atlantic Rainforest in a seven-day tour sponsored by Quetzal Tours and led by Bradley Davis, an expert bilingual guide. You'll stay in the Guapi-Açu Bird Lodge that is located atop a small hill overlooking a fabulous wetland in the Guapi-Açu Ecological Reserve (REGUA), an important 19,000-acre reserve in the Atlantic lowlands of the state of Rio de Janeiro. REGUA is a non-profit organization working to protect and restore habitat by planting thousands of native trees, purchasing forested land to expand the reserve, training and employing locals as forest rangers and



**Brazilian Ruby Hummingbird** by Bradley Davis.

birding guides, and hosting environmental education programs for local schoolchildren.

Brazil's Atlantic rainforest is full of colorful birds, including remarkable tanagers, hummingbirds, and parrots. Fruit and hummingbird feeders at the lodge and elsewhere will keep photographers busy. The wetland area at REGUA also should afford some good photo opportunities.

One can expect 240 - 280 species during our week of birding, including 60+ Atlantic rainforest endemics. A list of expected species is available upon request.

You are likely to catch a glimpse of Spot-billed Toucanets, Crescent-chested Puffbirds, Brazilian Ruby Hummingbirds, the handsome Shrike-like Cotinga, the endangered endemic Three-toed Jacamar, the spectacular Plovercrest, and much more.

The cost of \$2,500 includes lodging, meals, in-country transportation, and entrance fees. A portion of the fee is donated to FCAS. Contact Nick Komar to sign up or for more information: [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net).



**Three-toed Jacamar** by Bradley Davis.



**Plovercrest** by Bradley Davis.



**Greater Sage Grouse** by Nick Komar.

### 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



### FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Heman & Patricia Adams	Paul Husted	Barbara Patterson
Jim & Darla Anderson	Jax Mercantile Co.	Scott Powell
Bruce Baker	Laurie Kleespies	Robert Righter
David Bayer	Carol L. MacLean	Gary & Sharon Robinson
Mary Beck	Jessie Meschievitz	Carol Seemueller
Kathleen Carr	Nancy Metzler	Joann Thomas
Barbara Case	Gary C. Miller	Edith Thompson
Ray & Joan Glabach	Jennifer Monath	Bruce & Barbara Vigneault
Melannie Hartman	Brian & Marlene Myres	Daniel R. Voss

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.



**Prickly Pear Cactus in bloom  
on the Pawnee Grasslands.  
Photo by Bill Miller.**

**Loggerhead Shrikes at the  
Pawnee Grasslands (right).  
Photo by Bill Miller.**

**Swainson's Hawk (below) by  
Nick Komar.**



**Ring-necked  
Pheasant  
(right) by  
Nick Komar.**



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



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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  
 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

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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)