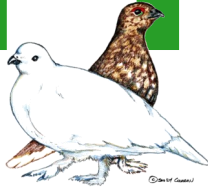


PTARMIGAN



FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 271968·Fort Collins,CO-80527-1968·www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Promoting the appreciation, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife through education, participation, stewardship, and advocacy.

December 2015

Volume 46, Issue 9

FCAS December Potluck and Member Slide Show Program

Thursday, Dec. 10, 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 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, and sound system. You bring your photos.



FCAS members and guests enjoying the potluck.
Photo by Bill Miller.

FCAS will provide coffee, tea, and water. Please bring a dish to pass (that will serve 6-8), your own place setting, serving, and eating utensils.

This is your opportunity and time to receive the applause! Join us for this special program meeting on Thursday, Dec. 10, at the Senior Center starting at 6:30 p.m.

FCAS's annual memberships are due in January.

We'll be sending out reminders after the first of the year, but you can get ahead by renewing today.

Dues are \$20 to receive the *Ptarmigan* newsletter electronically or \$30 for a printed copy. If you renewed September—December last year, your membership is good through January 2017. Remember, your membership dues are tax deductible. Please see the back of the newsletter for a renewal form or you can renew online at our website: www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.



President's Corner

by John Shenot

Last month I mentioned that the FCAS Board decided to raise a little extra money in 2016 through special fundraisers, just as we traditionally have done. This month I'm asking you, our members, to give me a call or send me an email with your suggestions.

The big fundraiser from our past was the Birdathon. From 1998 through 2012, FCAS raised over \$50,000 through this annual event. But after 2012, we suspended the Birdathon because it had become increasingly difficult to find volunteers to coordinate the event. Birdathons are still a popular fundraiser for many, if not most, Audubon chapters, and reinstating ours would be one obvious option, if we can find volunteers.

It's also been suggested that FCAS create a fundraiser based on a bird-related art show, competition, or silent auction. I often see people with some amazing cameras and lenses taking photographs of local birds. More than once I've thought one of those images would look good on my office wall, but do others feel the same way? Enough to take out their checkbooks?



FUNDRAISING

One other idea that often comes up is that we could invite a "very special guest" speaker or instructor to our area and charge admission. Unfortunately, the last time we tried this almost nobody bought tickets in advance, so we cut our losses and canceled the event. That doesn't mean I'm unwilling to try again; I think it could work if the guest had star power.

Anyway, the point of this article isn't for me to list the few ideas I can generate. The point is to urge you to send me even more creative ideas, and/or to volunteer to get a fundraiser off of the ground. Please do!

FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending one copy of our newsletter. Please 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 the newsletter, so to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan*, please support your local chapter and subscribe. See the details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.

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www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety>

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

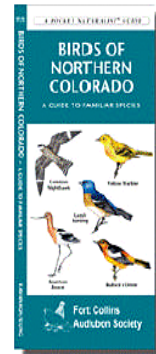
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



Make It a Holiday for the Birds!

December and the holidays are here. This year, share some holiday spirit with the birds by participating in the annual Christmas Bird Count and by decorating a tree with edible ornaments.



CBC participants by audubon.org

More than a century ago, Audubon pioneered citizen science with the first Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Today, the bird count is the longest-running wildlife census in the world. It informs and directs conservation efforts by providing much-needed data about bird populations and trends. Additionally, the data compiled is an indicator about ecosystems in general.

Fort Collins' CBC will be conducted on Dec. 19. For information contact Tom Hall, compiler, at redbear44@msn.com. There will be a compilation dinner afterward that will begin around 5 p.m. at the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (formerly Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory), 230 Cherry Street #150. Pizza will be provided and donations are encouraged.

The Loveland CBC will be on Jan. 1. Contact Nick Komar, quetzal65@comcast.net, to participate or learn more. Advanced birding skills are not required for either CBC; beginners can be paired with more experienced birders. If you live within a count circle and just want to record what comes to your backyard feeders, you are welcome to participate and should contact one of the CBC coordinators for details.

Whether you participate in the CBC or not, there's another great way to share the holiday spirit with the birds—decorate an outside tree with edible ornaments. The custom of decorating

a birds' Christmas tree dates back to the sixteenth century in northern Europe.

Although birds are not picky about the tree you choose to decorate, a conifer will offer the birds shelter and keep the ornaments more protected from snow and wind. For the best viewing experience, choose a tree near your house and close to a window so you can watch the birds as they come to the tree for the treats.

There are a variety of foods you can offer that will be appreciated by winter birds. Some of the more popular treats include pine cone feeders and donut wreaths covered with suet and birdseed, or peanut butter and birdseed. Small suet balls/cakes or small mesh bags of suet also are enjoyed. Make garlands of fruit using apple, pear, and raisins, or string together popcorn and cranberries. Hang apples from a bough. Be sure

to use biodegradable materials to hang the treats. The more you decorate the tree, the more species you'll attract and the more enjoyable the viewing experience.

To give birds time to find your tree, decorate early before the weather is at its worst. Not only will the birds appreciate it, you'll save yourself undue weather-related stress! Ideally, choose a tree where there are

feeders nearby. It will help the birds find the edible tree more quickly. Whether you make or buy your ornaments, be sure to make/buy extras for replacements throughout the winter. If possible, provide a heated birdbath to offer much-needed liquid water for the birds.

Participating in the CBC will help provide important data for researchers studying the status and ranges of bird populations. Decorating a tree for the birds can be fun and rewarding for you and your family, and it's a great way to feed the birds and share some holiday spirit!



Some of My Favorite Things

Sadly, I write my last Education Corner as a board member, the Education Chair, and a past president of FCAS. It's been a wonderful journey of eight years with many stops along the way.



Gentoo Penguin: one of Joann's "dream birds."

Some of my favorite moments as Education Chair were creating programs that contributed to people's enjoyment and knowledge about birds. One year we travelled each month to walk along the Poudre River observing the change of seasons. Birds change with the seasons and sometimes a surprise is the most fun, like when we found a snapping turtle digging its nest to

lay eggs or saw the wood duck standing in one of the old cottonwoods.

Our walks often had experts, like the forestry person who explained that the cottonwoods are old by our standards, but are not old by the river's standards. Photos of the river banks when settlers arrived show tall shrubs, not trees. We brought the trees.

Another year we visited a different natural area each month, often with Master Naturalists and/or experts in the field. We learned about geology, trees, flowers, and all things natural.

In addition to enjoying the outside, there were inside events that were part of the education function, like hosting the High Plains Landscape Workshop, and helping plan the county and city's annual event at the end of September that started as a birding festival and now has segued into a Fall Fest to encompass more activities. Bath Nursery's Bird Days at the end of January

is one of my favorites. We created programs for school science fairs, gave slide show programs to retirement facilities, and did just about everything that was requested in education.

I say "we" because several people helped at each event. Scott Cobble, FCAS secretary, was at almost every event with me; John Waddell routinely joined us along with Bill Miller and Ron Harden when they could. Liz Pruessner jumped on board when she joined the board. And while Hildy Morgan was on the board, she cheerfully offered to help. And, working with the teenage volunteers at the big events was some of the most fun.



Puffin.: another of Joann's "dream birds" to see on future travel.

But, all this said, I believe it is time to move on. Where to? Well, two international trips next year and looking down the line to China and Antarctica in 2017 with my daughter. Lots of study to do on those places and, gee, they have birds, don't they?

And, of course, lots more time to go birding!



FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Serena Brownlee
Scott Cobble
William Gerk
Judy Harrigal
Michael Lacy

Serena Mangus
Patricia D. Quier
Craig & Lynette Seymour
Ronald Singleton

Larry Tucci
Kay Ward
Nancy & John Weiner
Christopher Wilkins

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.

Chapter Elections in January — by Bill Miller

Each year we go through an election process to either add members to the chapter's Board of Directors (BoD) or to fill vacancies. Officers and directors-at-large are elected for one-year terms, with the exception that the president will serve a two-year term. Our current, president, John Shenot, is still in the first year of his two-year term. A president-elect should be elected to serve during the second year of the president's term of office. Committee chairpersons and chairs of special and ad hoc committees are appointed by the president.

A nominating committee is formed each fall to encourage chapter members to either run for election to an office or a director position. The nominating committee also identifies chapter members who are willing to serve as chairpersons of the various standing, special, and ad hoc committees. This year's nominating committee members are Lynne Hull (970-416-1881 or

BECOME A BOARD MEMBER

Lynne.Hull@eco-art.org), Bill Miller (970-493-7693 or 5mcorp@comcast.net), and Liz Pruessner (970-484-4371 or lizpru@colostate.edu).

The list of board positions is as follows; vacancies for 2016 are shown in italics:

Elected: President, Vice-President, *President-Elect*, Secretary, Treasurer.

Appointed: *Conservation, Education, Field Trips, Finance, Membership, Programs, Publicity, Hospitality, Scholarship, Volunteer Coordinator*, ACC Delegate.

If you would be interested in serving in one of the elected or appointed positions, or know someone who might be interested, please contact one of the three nominating committee members.

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.fortcollinsaudubon.org for more information and updates.

Dec. 13, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com, work: 970-669-1185, home: 970-669-8095. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels are welcome. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot. Call for any change.

Dec. 19, Saturday, Fort Collins CBC. See Page 3 for details.

Jan. 1, Friday, Loveland CBC. See Page 3 for details.



Northern Flicker, Douglass Reservoir, by Laurie Kleespies.

Where are the Field Trip Reports?

By John Shenot

Some of you may have noticed that we stopped posting new field trip reports on the FCAS website in mid-2014. In my zeal for promoting our new Facebook page, I was diligent in posting field trip reports on Facebook, but not on our website. This came up at the Board's October strategic planning session, and we decided that field trip reports should appear in both locations. So that's what you can expect in the future: you'll be able to see all the highlights from our sponsored field trips on our Facebook page or our website, whichever you prefer. It may take a couple of months for us to upload old trip reports, so please be patient. And come on out for one of our upcoming trips!



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 (NSA), or both.

- New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member \$ 20 Name: _____
Receive the FCAS *Ptarmigan* by email
- New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member \$ 30 Address: _____
Receive the FCAS *Ptarmigan* by mail
- Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member \$750 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Receive FCAS *Ptarmigan* by mail or email
- Additional support for FCAS programs \$ ___ Phone: _____
- Additional support for Alex Cringan Fund \$ ___ Email: _____
(natural history education grants)
- New NAS member \$ 20 May we send you FCAS email alerts if updates occur for field
Receive the NAS *Audubon* by mail trips, programs, etc.? Yes or No
- Renewing NAS member \$ 35 May we contact you for volunteer activities such as helping at
Receive the NAS *Audubon* by mail events or contacting legislators on important issues? Yes or No

Total 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 31 extend throughout the following year. Applications can be
completed at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.