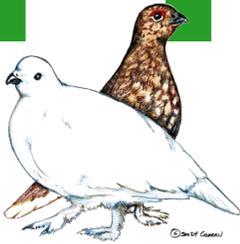


PTARMIGAN



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.

March 2017

Volume 48, Issue 3

FCAS Hosts

Dave Leatherman—Birder, Entomologist, Writer

“The Benefits of Urban Birds”

Thursday, March 9

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

Social Time: 7 p.m.; Program 7:20 p.m.

Dave Leatherman will speak on how we all enjoy birds near where we live, whether it be in our yards, at feeders, during a walk, or on the way to work. They are beautiful, interesting, and soothe our souls; in those simple, emotional ways they benefit our life and raise its quality. But what about the other things birds do? They fill niches in food webs, moderate insect populations, alert us to changes in our climate, serve as "canaries in the coal mine," pollinate flowers, enhance the germination and distribution of plant seeds, facilitate the recycling of dead trees, build houses for one another, and much more. In this presentation, we will explore the benefits that birds provide each other, us, and myriad additional



Myrtle Warbler eating a Miller Moth by David Leatherman.

members of the natural world. Dave will include ways you can help them accomplish their many jobs.

Dave served as the forest entomologist for the Colorado State Forest Service from 1974 to 2005 where his major responsibilities included all aspects of Mountain Pine Beetle, teaching, and surveys.

He is an avid birder, active in the Colorado

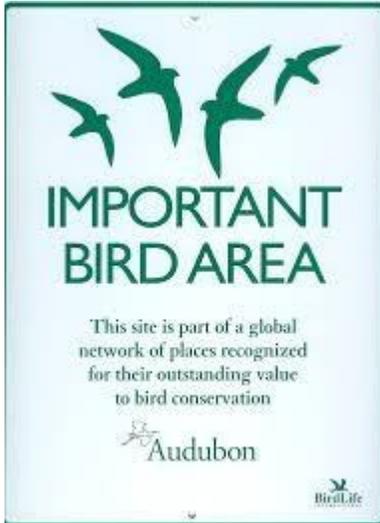
Field Ornithologists, has seen 449 species in the state, and has been part of finding four First State Records, including a Couch's Kingbird seen in Lamar last spring.

Join us at the Fort Collins Senior Center on March 9. This program is free and the public is welcomed.

Welcome New National Members

FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending complimentary copies of our newsletter for one month. We invite you to 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 if you'd like to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan* after the complimentary issue, 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.fortcollinsaudubon.org.

The FCAS Board got a late start to deciding what our priorities for 2017 should be, but I say “better late than never.” For 2017, our top three strategic priorities are to complete the process for designation of the Cache la Poudre Urban River Corridor as a National Audubon Society Important Bird Area (IBA), start work on a new



“Legacy Project,” and rebuild our Education and Conservation Committees. In addition, we agreed that FCAS needs to stay focused on some ongoing priorities that neither start nor finish in 2017: recruiting new leaders, fundraising, website improvements, and building and maintaining a comprehensive FCAS calendar.

Regarding the IBA designation, the Board had hoped to finish that effort last year, but it

has carried into 2017. We are more determined than ever to get the job done this year and hope to report progress very soon. As for the new Legacy Project, I once again ask you to send me ideas for projects that would promote nature appreciation and conservation and make FCAS more visible in the communities we serve. For example, last year we helped the Town of Berthoud update a kiosk at Hillsdale Park with a bird

ID poster and checklists. We'd love to do a similar project elsewhere this year, or to start the process for a bigger project that might require more time or funding. And finally, drop me a line if you want to volunteer on our Conservation or Education Committees.



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
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Jax Outdoor Gear 1200 N. College (970) 221-0544	Jax Farm & Ranch 1000 N. Hwy. 287 (970) 481-2221
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www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

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



“The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because people don’t do anything about it.” —*Albert Einstein*

Not a Time for Indifference

Like the majority of progressives, I’ve become extremely dismayed by the happenings during the first four weeks of our new president and Congress. If they are allowed to move forward without hearing from the public, the citizens of the United States stand to lose or experience drastic reductions in both the financial safety nets, such as Social Security, and the environmental protections that have been hard-fought for—protections afforded by the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the many EPA regulations from which virtually every inhabitant benefits.

While at the February 9 program meeting, I thought about making an announcement similar to this: “I am now the current Chair of the Conservation Committee, and if there ever was a time when that committee could use help, it is now. I would like you all to act as members of the Conservation Committee, to pay attention to what is happening in national, state, and local politics, and to let your elected officials know what you are thinking.”

It has been said that one letter received is representative of 10 people with the same opinion(s) expressed in that letter. Letter writing has been largely

“One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics, is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.”

~Plato

replaced by email and social media, but the fact still remains that one communication of any sort to an elected official represents the opinions of 10 people. Don’t think that someone else will communicate with our elected officials—you must become active, perhaps more than you have ever been.

To contact Colorado senators:

Mail: U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; Sen. Michael Bennet, 202-224-5852 or 303-455-7600, <https://www.bennet.senate.gov/>; Sen. Cory Gardner, 202-224-5941 or 303-391-5777, <https://www.gardner.senate.gov/>

U.S. Representatives:

Mail: U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

Find your Representative: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

White House:

Mail: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500; comment line, 202-456-1111, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/#page>

Colorado State Legislature: <http://leg.colorado.gov/legislators>

A Look Back at Chapter History

The following is derived from the binder of early *Ptarmigan* newsletters that were archived at CSU’s Morgan Library. The following is a summary from Vol. 1, No. 11, November 1970. David Lupton was editor.

“Birding in East Africa was the topic of Mrs. C. Vernon Cole’s slide talk at the October 20 meeting of the Fort Collins Bird Club. Approximately 20 people shared Terry’s presentation of her recent trip to Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda.

“Inherit the Wild,” the first Fort Collins showing of the National Audubon Film Series, will be presented by D. J. Nelson at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, December 3, at the Lincoln Junior High School auditorium, 417 S. Meldrum, Fort Collins. Tickets are now on sale at the Wilderness Outfitters in Fort Collins and Fishback Camera Shops in Fort Collins, Loveland, Greeley, and Longmont. Prices are: Adults \$1.25, students \$0.75.

“Inherit the Wild,” filmed and narrated by D.J. Nelson, will be presented by the Recreation Association of Graduate Students and the Outdoor Recreation Club of

Colorado State University in cooperation with the National Audubon Society.

“Of interest: In 1897, W.W. Cooke recorded 360 species and varieties of birds in Colorado, of which 228 were known to breed. In 1967, A.M. Bailey and R.J. Niedrach recorded 441 species, plus 64 additional subspecies for Colorado, with 247 breeding species within the state.”



Common Nighthawk by Nick Komar.



Become a Citizen Scientist—Monitor Owls Along the Poudre River

Eastern Screech-Owls are the most common owl species in North America, yet little is known about their habitat needs or population dynamics. To fill these knowledge gaps, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies enlists volunteers to visit sites along the Poudre River and collect data on the presence of Eastern Screech-Owls, other owls, and additional factors. The data gathered by these citizen scientists contributes to the understanding of owl populations along the Poudre’s important urban natural area and is used in the management and restoration efforts along the Poudre.

Volunteers are needed to monitor Eastern Screech-Owls along the river in Fort Collins from early March to late May. A training session will be held March 4 in Fort Collins. This is a great opportunity for citizens to see and hear owls at night; learn about the value of the Poudre River and surrounding habitat, and Eastern Screech-Owl behavior during breeding season; and to contribute to research and conservation.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s All About Birds website (https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Screech-Owl/id) describes the Eastern Screech-Owl as “no bigger than a pint glass, but with a mysterious trill” that will catch your attention in the night, the time when they are most active. In fact, because

they are more often heard than seen, “most bird watchers know the species primarily from its trilling or whinnying song.” Eastern Screech-Owls are “common east of the Rockies in woods, suburbs, and parks, and are found wherever trees are. They are even willing to nest in backyard nest boxes. These supremely camouflaged birds hide out in nooks and tree crannies through the day, so train your ears and listen for them at night.”

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies conducts this citizen science project every spring to monitor Eastern Screech-Owls along the Poudre River in Fort Collins. In 2016, 35 volunteers collected data on screech-owls along a 21-mile stretch of the Poudre River, visiting 36 randomly selected

sites four times at night. Eleven Eastern Screech-Owls were detected at eight sites. Using four years of data from 2013-2016, on average there were 50 breeding pairs across 69 sites along the river.

No previous experience is necessary to join this vital effort. Volunteers must be able to conduct surveys at night, follow a standardized protocol for gathering data, and drive to monitoring sites and walk to the river. Interested individuals should RSVP for the training with Research Biologist Rob Sparks at 970-482-1707, ext. 19 or rob.sparks@birdconservancy.org.



Eastern Screech-Owl in mature tree by Rob Sparks.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

- Barb Adams
- Rick Berry
- Denise Bretting
- Kate Carr
- Larry Caswell
- Libby Edwards
- Debora Forbes
- Irene Fortune
- Larry Griffin
- Cliff Hendrick
- Jeanne Howell
- Cynthia Jackson
- Carol Jones
- Charles Kopp
- Larry Moskowitz
- Don & Linda O’Brien
- Barbara Patterson
- Chris & Joe Polazzi
- Anne Saunders
- Craig & Lynette Seymour
- Pat Stinson & Mark Videan
- Kay Ward
- James Welch

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.



Eastern Screech-Owl from <http://www.audubon.org>



Birding in Brazil's Southern Amazon—July 23-31

Join Quetzal Tours on a week-long birding excursion in Brazil's Southern Amazon, July 23–31. The adventure begins in the town of Alta Floresta in the north of the state of Mato Grosso, with guide Bradley Davis. The trip includes birding in Fazenda Anacã, a unique ecotourism project, and along the Rio Azul, an exciting new destination in the southern Brazilian Amazon.

During the week in the Southern Amazon, participants should encounter around 300 species of birds. The areas visited hold a number of endemic, rare, and local species, among which include Kawall's Parrot, Crimson-bellied Parakeet, Razor-billed



Crimson-bellied Parakeet from <https://en.wikipedia.org>

Curassow, Crimson Topaz, Tapajos Hermit, Black-girdled Barbet, Bronzy and Blue-cheeked Jacamars, Gould's Toucanet, Curl-crested Araçari, Glossy Antshrike, Point-tailed Palmcreeper, and much more.

The price of \$2,800 per person, double occupancy, includes eight nights lodging with meals, ground transportation, entrance fees, and expert bilingual birding guide. Quetzal Tours also donates a portion of the proceeds to FCAS. For more information or to reserve a spot, contact Contact Nick Komar: quetzal65@comcast.net; 970-449-3645.

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. Inquire with the FCAS field trip coordinator (John Shenot) or the trip leader named below if you need to borrow binoculars. Please understand that changes to the dates, meeting times or locations, and trip leaders are occasionally unavoidable. Contact the listed trip leader prior to the day of the trip or visit fortcollinsaudubon.org for more information and updates. RSVP strongly encouraged.

March 12, 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 on the second Sunday of each month. All levels are welcome.



Harris Sparrow seen on Fort Collins CBC by Doug Swartz.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. Mountain Savings Time in the parking lot. Note: This is the first day of daylight savings time—spring forward and don't show up an hour late! Call for any change. Dates and times for future surveys are as follows: April 9 at 7 a.m.,

May 14 at 6:30 a.m., June 11 at 6:30 a.m., July 9 at 6:30 a.m., and August 13 at 6:30 a.m.



American Dipper by Larry Lechner.

March 18, Saturday, Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area. Leader: John Shenot, johnshenot@gmail.com, 802-595-1669. Fossil Creek Reservoir is a magnet for migrating waterfowl and a nesting site for Bald Eagles. The habitat surrounding the reservoir also attracts a wide variety of species, making this natural area one of the top 10 birding destinations in Larimer County. The entrance to Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area is on Carpenter Road/CR 32, approximately one mile west of I-25. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot.



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.

- 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.