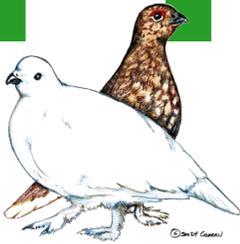


# PTARMIGAN



## FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 271968·Fort Collins, CO·80527-1968·[www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org)

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

April 2017

Volume 48, Issue 4

### FCAS Hosts Steve Jones, Author

Presenting:

“Swan Lakes”

Thursday, April 13

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

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

Steve Jones believes the recovery of Trumpeter Swans from just a dozen or so known individuals during the 1920s to 55,000 today is one of North America's most heartening wildlife success stories. The recovery is vividly apparent in the Nebraska Sandhills where preservation of historic nesting and wintering areas has led to an increase in

the Trumpeter Swan population from zero in 1910 to nearly 1,000 today. Steve, through impressively beautiful photos, will take us on a visit to several of these locations, including two nesting lakes that were named after the swans during the 1880s before the birds were completely extirpated from the Great Plains. He will explore with us the uniqueness of the Sandhills' trumpeter swans, probably the only truly nonmigratory swan population in North America, and the tenderness,



Trumpeter Swans by Steve Jones.

and courage of nesting families.

Steve Jones is author of *The Last Prairie, a Sandhills Journal*, and co-author of *The Short-grass Prairie*, the *Peter-son Field Guide to the North American Prairie*, *Colorado Nature Almanac*, *Wild Boulder County*, and *Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range*. Steve organized the first comprehensive small owl and wintering raptor surveys in

Boulder County and

helped plan and carry out the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas. His 25 years of consulting work includes more than two-dozen breeding bird and resource inventories for city, county, and state open space programs. He taught in the Boulder Valley Public Schools for 33 years.

Join us April 13 at the Fort Collins Senior Center. This program is free and open to the public.

**FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members** by sending one complimentary copy of our newsletter. Join us at our programs on the second Thursday of the month to learn more about FCAS. National dues do not cover the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, so to receive it please subscribe. See details on Page 6 or on our website at [www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org).

## President's Corner – by John Shenot

Every year when we elect new Board members, those of us on the Board sense the appreciation of the members for our willingness to volunteer. And every time someone leaves the Board, we thank them for their service at a chapter meeting. But I don't think I've done enough as your current President to acknowledge and thank our volunteers and contractors. I want to use this month's column to single out three of our most devoted helpers—though they are by no means the only ones.

Denise Bretting organizes and leads our monthly bird surveys at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area. Since I do double-duty as Field Trip coordinator, I can't tell you what a relief it is to know that every month there will be at least one field trip that will be well-organized, well-attended, and enjoyable. I don't have to do anything other than ask Denise the dates and start times. She makes the magic happen, month after month, and we all benefit from her efforts. (So does the City of Fort Collins, which has received the survey data for all these years!) Thanks, Denise!

Scott Miller is our webmaster and Carol Jones is our newsletter editor. Both receive a token payment for their efforts, but their value to FCAS is far greater than any payment they receive. We have a website that is getting better and better every year, and this lovely newsletter gets published month after month with nary a glitch. Both work very independently, and I literally wouldn't know what to do without them. Each of them has been helping this chapter for years, and we all benefit from their efforts. Thanks, Scott and Carol!

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Visit us on Facebook:

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



## A Look Back at Chapter History

The following is from the January 1971 *Ptarmigan* when David Lupton was editor:

“The 1970 Christmas bird count was presented by Dr. Ronald A. Ryder at the Foothills Unitarian Church on December 15 at the monthly meeting of the Fort Collins Bird Club. The slide presentation acquainted members with representative birds to be looked for on the counts.”

“At the December meeting, the Fort Collins Bird Club decided to proceed with planning for the installation of bird feeders at nursing homes in Fort Collins. Persons interested in helping with this project can contact Mrs. C. Vernon Cole or Clait E. Braun.”



“Clait Braun also discussed the possibility of spot announcements on local radio stations concerning activities of the club and other items of interest to birders. Both local radio stations expressed willingness to air announcements during public service time. This program will be initiated in 1971 under the direction of

the President. Persons interested in this program can contact Gilbert Findley.”

### 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 price of apathy toward public affairs is to be ruled by evil men.” –*Plato*

“Those who by their silence refuse to struggle against injustice, make themselves equally guilty with the evil-doers.” –*Mohandas Gandhi*

Where to start? There is so much going on in Washington, D.C. that, for all practical purposes, it is impossible for one person to keep up with all of it. I subscribe to about 70 online list servs, both progressive and conservative, in an effort to stay informed on a wide selection of issues.

Please note that the articles in the *Ptarmigan* are generated as much as 3 ½ weeks prior to when the newsletter is distributed to members. That makes it extremely difficult to write a conservation article for the *Ptarmigan* that is timely. Currently, legislation is moving rapidly through both houses of Congress. By the time the *Ptarmigan*, with information on an issue, is received by our members, the issue may already be past the point of effective citizen response.

As I write this article (March 12), there is a bill before Congress that would reduce the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency by 25% this year. Those who have a better understanding than I of these matters are saying that the impacts will be felt the most by the already underserved, poor, immigrant, and minority communities.

In an effort to give FCAS members more advanced notice of a specific issue I have proposed that the chapter generate an email address list serv of those members willing to submit comments to elected officials and appropriate agency staff on specific issues by telephone



or email. This was attempted a number of years ago using a Yahoo list serv to distribute announcements in a timely manner. Unfortunately the person who set up the list serv moved on and we no longer have the passwords and other information necessary to update that list. Fortunately, as of today, we have had a person step forward to create such a list serv.

If you are willing to telephone or email the appropriate persons with respect to an issue, we would greatly appreciate you contacting me and providing your email address. I envision a maximum of two emails per month that may, or may not, have multiple issues contained in them. Recipients would be free to respond to any or all of each email's contents. Remember, one contact between a constituent and an elected official is regarded as being representative of 10 people.



Eastern Screech Owl by Carole Hossan.



Northern Flicker by Nick Komar.



### The Oasis at the Arsenal

Surreal is a word I would use to describe several views at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (RMANWR). The first view is of a long vista of short-grass prairie with a backdrop of Denver’s skyscrapers reaching for the mountains; second, in another direction atop Rattlesnake Hill, is a grassland view with the tops of Denver International Airport’s iconic rooftop white protuberances poking above the horizon. RMANWR is a 15,000-acre oasis for nature not far from the Suncor Oil Refinery in Commerce City. RMANWR covers what used to be a World War II chemical weapons factory that underwent several transformations and was ultimately cleaned up and made into a National Wildlife Refuge in 1992 due to the discovery of roosting Bald Eagles within it.

RMANWR now has a modern Visitor Center with educational displays, 10 miles of easy hiking trails, fishing, lakes, and woodlands, but the environmental star is the short- and long-grass prairie. My first visits were during fall and winter. This winter a highlight on a wildlife viewing bus tour was seeing a patient Ferruginous Hawk sitting atop a large pole. A thrill for me was a very close sighting of an American Tree Sparrow, which is one of the 280 bird species that have been recorded at RMANWR. You can discover what birds currently have been seen at RMANWR by



Ferruginous Hawk by Harry Rose.



American Tree Sparrow by Carole Hossan.

using Cornell University’s eBird Trail Tracker (<http://trailtracker.org/>).

I am looking forward to my first springtime visit when there should be wetland areas and wildflowers and spring migrant birds. In the summer, Burrowing Owls arrive to nest and raise their young in abandoned prairie dog tunnels. Northern Harriers skimming over the prairie grasses or Bald Eagles powering closely overhead are not uncommon sights. One unusual sight during a birding hike was seeing an Osprey harassing a juvenile Bald Eagle sitting in a large tree.

RMANWR has a variety of free programs, but reservations by telephone are required. Programs include Hike-N-Bird, wildlife viewing tours, and bird-specific educational talks featuring live birds such as owls and falcons. Some programs are youth-oriented. In addition to birds, there is a large herd of bison roaming in a large fenced territory and two black-footed ferrets have their own inside/outside habitat. Mule and white-tailed deer as well as coyotes are sometimes seen.

Sign up to receive an email newsletter about future programs at [rockymountainarsenal@fws.gov](mailto:rockymountainarsenal@fws.gov) and include the words Wild News in the subject line. Hours are Monday—Sunday, sunrise to sunset. Visitor Center Hours are Wednesday—Sunday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

#### FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Barbara Case  
James DeMartini  
Kathleen Dowd  
April Eisele  
Debora Forbes

Ron Harden  
David Hartley  
Christina Jean  
Nancy B. Jones  
Joyce Jones  
Scott Powell

Thank you for your membership. Your support makes our programs and conservation efforts possible.

#### FCAS Salutes our

#### Newest Lifetime Members

Katrina Vowels      John W. Waddell  
Thank you for your dedication to our chapter  
and your lifetime support for  
the mission of FCAS.



## Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Inquire with the FCAS field trip coordinator (John Shenot) or the trip leader named if you need to borrow binoculars. Please know 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](http://fortcollinsaudubon.org) for more information and updates. RSVP strongly encouraged.

**April 9, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto: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. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot. Call for any change. Future surveys are as follows: June 11, 6:30 a.m.; July 9, 6:30 a.m.; Aug. 13, 6:30 a.m.; Sept. 10, 7 a.m.

**April 29, 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 advantage of this 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 of CR 29, about one mile from the intersection of CR 27 and CR 29. Some hiking on moderately steep roads and trails will be necessary. An optional farm-to-table lunch will be available to all participants (donations appreciated).

**May 4, Saturday, Colorado State Forestry Service Nursery.** Leader: John Shenot, [johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com), 802-595-1669. This field trip offers a unique opportunity to bird on restricted property that has a great variety of trees and lots of "edges"



Northern Shrike at Bobcat Ridge by Andy Goris.

that can make viewing birds easier. We will start at 7 a.m. The entrance to the nursery is on Laporte Avenue, west of Overland Trail. Turn in the driveway of the Colorado State Forestry Service—sign on the left. On the far side of the first parking lot, there is a road on the left that leads to the parking lot.

**May 12, Friday, Running Deer and Cottonwood Hollow Natural Areas.** Leader: Sirena Brownlee, [sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com](mailto:sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com), 970-980-6184. This evening birding walk should turn up some late migrating shorebirds and a variety of water birds and raptors. Plan for a 1 to 1.5 mile walk on dirt trails. Meet at 6 p.m. in the Running Deer parking lot on East Prospect.

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## 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-



Orange-backed Troupial by Nick Komar.

bellied Parakeet, Razor-billed Curassow, Crimson Topaz, Tapajos Hermit, Black-girdled Barbet, Bronzy and Blue-cheeked Jacamars, Gould's Toucanet, Curl-crested Araçari, Glossy Antshrike, Point-tailed Palm-creeper, 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](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net); 970-449-3645.



Fort Collins Audubon Society  
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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](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org).