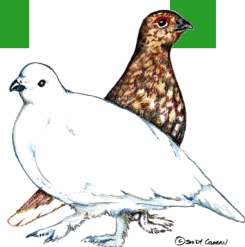


# PTARMIGAN



## 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.

**May 2017**

**Volume 48, Issue 5**

### FCAS Hosts

**Barbara Patterson: Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resources Program**

**Front Range Community College**

**"Kenya, Birds, and Life"**

**Thursday, May 11**

**Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.**

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

Barb Patterson, Faculty Member at Front Range Community College in the Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resources Program, equipped with binoculars, two field-guides, a journal, and a copy of Richard Leakey's book, "Wildlife Wars," spent 18 days in Africa, birding, wildlife watching, and experiencing life in Kenya. She learned about conservation education and worked in a Samburu village, the Twala Women's cultural cooperative, and two schools in Kenya to make the trip even more rewarding. Each day there were surprises under every tree and along every dusty rutted road. Join us on May 11, at the Fort Collins Senior Center, when Barb will share with us her daily adventures and this highly educational experience.

Over the years, Barb has taught everything from or-



**African Buffalo and Cattle Egret by Barb Patterson.**

nithology, wildlife, forestry, fire ecology, and field research techniques including chain-saw safety and operation. She is always outside, helping students learn practical skills and study at field sites in Red Feather Lakes, Rocky Mountain National Park, city natural areas, and county open spaces. She taught a tropical ecology course in Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Peru and a

wildlife ecology course in the Tetons, Moab, Cordova, Alaska, and Rocky Mountain National Park. Her safari to Kenya was in conjunction with the Samburu Youth Education Fund with Brett Bruyere, Associate Professor, Department of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources, Colorado State University, and Karen Canino, a local artist who does community and cultural work in Kenya. This program is free and the public is welcomed.

### Welcome New National Members

FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending one complimentary copy of our newsletter. We invite you to our monthly programs on the second Thursday of the month to find out more about FCAS. National dues do not cover the costs of the newsletter, so to receive the *Ptarmigan*, please subscribe. Details are on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at [www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org).

## President's Corner

By John Shenot

People often ask me how many members we have, and I often struggle to answer the question. The answer is a little tricky because we represent and have contacts with people who are FCAS members, and people living in our area who are members of National Audubon Society (NAS).

FCAS and NAS are distinct and independent organizations. I know that many people are confused by this distinction, so I will explain. In the simplest terms, and ignoring some minor details, the difference is that NAS members get the beautiful NAS magazine, but not the FCAS newsletter. FCAS members get the newsletter, but not the magazine. Dues for NAS membership go almost entirely to the national organization, with only a small portion returned to the local chapter to which the member is assigned (in this case, FCAS), while dues for FCAS stay largely within our chapter and community. Many of us see good value in being a member of both NAS and FCAS.

According to our April 2017 membership committee report, 126 people held only an FCAS membership; an additional 586 people who held only an NAS membership were assigned by NAS to our chapter; and 76 people were members of both FCAS and NAS.

As an organization, FCAS gets most of its revenue and all of its energy from members. We would love to expand our ranks, and we'd especially like to invite NAS members to become FCAS members. We hope NAS members will consider this and we hope all of you will spread the word about FCAS to your friends, neighbors, and colleagues.

### FCAS CONTACTS

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[www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org)

Visit us on Facebook:

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

## FCAS Fall Fundraiser



Help us with our October 12 silent auction and raise funds for FCAS projects. We are seeking new and/or gently used nature books, animal art work, bird plates and figurines, your own home crafted bird houses, and anything you no longer need and think other nature lovers would enjoy and treasure. Wildlife related items donated by local businesses also would be appreciated.

We can accept donations anytime and will send you a letter thanking you for your contribution. Contact any member of the FCAS board or call/email: Hildy Morgan, (970) 223-3493, [hildy.morgan@gmail.com](mailto:hildy.morgan@gmail.com)

## Have a Great Summer and Many Birding Adventures!



The *Ptarmigan* takes the summer months off—we will return in September to keep you up-to-date on FCAS activities and information.

### FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

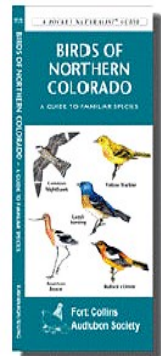
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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 most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." —*Alice Walker*

"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little." —*Edmund Burke*

## Citizen Participation: Supporting FCAS

To piggy-back on the topic of this column in the April issue of the *Ptarmigan*, I repeat what I wrote at that time: It is important to note that the articles in the *Ptarmigan* are generated as much as 3 1/2 weeks prior to distribution. That makes it extremely difficult to write a conservation article that is timely. We are, therefore, in the process of establishing an Action Alert list serv that will allow subscribers to effectively contact their elected representatives.

This past Saturday (May 4), I participated in a webinar arranged by Audubon Rockies for the leadership of our state's Audubon chapters. As stated in their invitation: "We are seeing serious threats to bedrock environmental laws, and efforts to financially cripple federal agencies that oversee the health of our natural resources. These actions endanger our land, water, air, and wildlife—we need your help to stop this." The webinar provided the main points of effective advocacy, and provided information on effective communication with elected representatives. I hope to provide those points to those who subscribe to our Action Alert list serv.

I am encouraged by the fact that one person did respond to last month's article and let me know that she wished to be subscribed to that list serv. I hope that we will be assisted by many more in this effort as I strongly feel that at this point in our nation's history, it needs the support of its citizens.

A difficulty our chapter is experiencing is that there are too few people trying to keep the chapter operating

as it should. I'm always reminded of the old adage: many hands make light work. The 10 active board members, some who are still employed, would grateful-



ly appreciate any assistance that our members can provide. Many of the operations that keep our chapter operating often have a period of learning associated with them before a person can function independently. But the rewards are great in that the chapter could accomplish much more than it currently does.

For example, on Saturday, June 3, we will set up a booth at the Poudre River Fest, which will be held in the area of the historic oxbow to the south of the New Belgium brewery. The festival will run from noon until 7 p.m. (see article below). We could use four people to set up (and take down) our canopy, and then try to have two people on hand at all times throughout the day to distribute information and ask questions. Please contact Bill Miller at [5mcorp@comcast.net](mailto:5mcorp@comcast.net) or 493-7693 if you can help with this event.

## Poudre RiverFest Restores, Celebrates Our Local River



Six nonprofit organizations are partnering to host the 4<sup>th</sup> Poudre RiverFest, a community festival, from 12 to 7 p.m. on June 3 at the Poudre River Oxbow located adjacent to New Belgium Brewing Company. Admission is free.

The RiverFest features activities for people to explore the role of the river

volunteer activities will take place throughout the day with a culminating celebration in the afternoon.

All proceeds from the festival support conservation and education nonprofits in Fort Collins



Poudre River from  
[www.fcgov.com](http://www.fcgov.com).

as an important habitat for wildlife, a recreation area and a source for clean drinking water. Educational and





## The Complexities of Bird Behavior

At this time of year, bird behaviors such as long distance migration, singing, displaying, and nest building are so much a part of the natural order of things that it is easy to give them little thought. There are some bird behaviors, however, that leave us in wonderment. A recent visit to New Zealand demonstrated just that.

New Zealand is a land of many strange birds, including a plover called a Wrybill whose unique beak curves,



Wrybill photo from <http://wrybill-tours.com>.

not up or down, but always to the right, and is used to pry riverbed pebbles under which they find insect larvae. However, it was these and other birds' fearless, "friendly," and curious behavior, not their appearances, that really stood out. One such bird was the sparrow-sized New Zealand Robin. Not only do they approach



Pukeko from <https://blackcat.co.nz>.

humans readily, but actually are interactive, waiting expectantly until a stick or toe is dragged in the soil so they can hunt in the exposed area. This overall fearless behavior is labeled as "island tameness."

Charles Darwin described island animals as tamer than mainland animals, and scientific studies support this observation. Darwin's explanation for this behavior was that it benefitted the animal by keeping it from wasting time and energy preparing to flee nonexistent threats. Such tame populations are vulnerable to predation

when predators are introduced and this has led to the extinction of many island bird species, both flightless and capable of flight. This begs the question: Is island tameness learned, genetic (inherent), or a bit of both? Would an egg from a tame island population reared in a mainland population produce an adult that also is tame?

A study of the physiology of island tameness and introduced predators in marine iguanas of the Galapagos Islands provides some insight into the essence of island tameness. Two factors were investigated: (1) the iguanas' ability to recognize danger (wariness), and (2) their corticosterone stress response to that danger. The conclusion was that when

repeatedly chased experimentally, the corticosterone stress response improved over time, but the iguanas' ability to recognize danger did not improve at the same level. Paraphrasing, they were slow learners when it came to recognizing danger, but once recognized their reaction to danger improved. So, are New Zealand's tame birds in the same situation? Is wariness a genetic trait, which in this case has not been selected for and therefore resulted in an inability to identify predators? Is another factor involved?



New Zealand Robin from <http://upcountry.co.nz/>.

The scientific study of island tameness in birds is limited and much



Rock Wren from [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).

more evaluation is needed to understand this unfamiliar phenomenon. However, it is unlikely we will ever fully understand island tameness or the common bird behaviors of long-distance migration, bird song, or skillful nest creation—making bird study endlessly fascinating.



## 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](http://fortcollinsaudubon.org) for more information and updates. RSVP strongly encouraged.*

**May 6, 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 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; there is a sign on the left side of the road. On the far side of the first parking lot, there is a road on the left that leads to the nursery parking lot. Note: This trip was incorrectly listed as May 4 in the April

Williamson's Sapsucker by Ron Harden. newsletter. The correct

date is Saturday, April 6.

**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 Road.

**May 14, 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 6:30 a.m. in the parking lot. Call for any change. Dates and times for future surveys are June 11 at 6:30 a.m., July 9 at 6:30 a.m., August 13 at 6:30 a.m., and September 10 at 7 a.m.

**June 3, Saturday, Lily Lake (Rocky Mountain National Park) and Matthews-Reeser Bird Sanctuary (Estes Park).** Leader: Ron Harden, [hardenrr@msn.com](mailto:hardenrr@msn.com), 970-667-3819. The Lily Lake area of the national park has marsh, riparian, and montane forest habitats as well as lake surface. Waterfowl such as Common Goldeneye, shorebirds such as Spotted Sandpiper, and passerines such as Williamson's Sapsucker are seen often. American Dippers may be present along the shoreline and beaver have been active. After enjoying Lily Lake, we'll visit the bird sanctuary in Estes Park. The trail through Matthews-Reeser is a good place to look for warbler species, and Osprey are often overhead. This field trip will begin at 8:30 a.m. at the Lily Lake parking area. No entrance fee is required at either location. Those who wish can eat lunch together at a local café before returning home. Note: Those wishing to carpool to Lily Lake from the Fort Collins area can make their own arrangements or meet at 7 a.m. at North Lake Park (on the NW corner of Lake Loveland), in the parking lot on the right just before the water crossing, for a 7:15 a.m. departure.

**June 17, Saturday, Pawnee National Grasslands.** Leader: Bill Miller, [5mcorp@comcast.net](mailto:5mcorp@comcast.net), 970-493-7693. This field trip will leave Fort Collins at 6



Spotted Sandpiper by Ron Harden.

a.m. Contact Bill for details on where to meet. 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.





## If We Build It, Will They Come?

Nest Boxes for American Kestrels ——— Photos and article by Doug Swartz

According to the American Kestrel Partnership (<http://kestrel.peregrinefund.org>), American Kestrel populations have been in steep decline for several decades. Nest boxes are one way to make life easier for these gorgeous birds of prey, and to learn a lot in the process! The following is Doug Swartz's account of his



Male kestrel in flight. We first observed kestrels on and near the nest box pole in mid-March.

efforts and the rewards.

February 2008: I installed a nest box in the Greyrock Commons neighborhood

open space. Target: American Kestrels. In early April, a pair of kestrels arrived and moved in! June 28: five young birds fledge.

Fast forward to 2016: Eight kestrel nesting attempts in nine years; five successful. Twenty-one chicks fledged from the box. Unsuccessful years included no birds, eggs that never hatched, and a brood demise (cause unknown).



Female kestrel checking out the lodging option.

Over the years, I've had the privilege of closely observing and learning about breeding/nesting/brood-rearing behaviors and chronology of American Kestrels. In 2011, I added a miniature Wi-Fi camera, which let us enter the box's interior and see what we'd been missing. Fascinating, remarkable! And this inside view has gotten some neighbors engaged.

2017: After no nesting attempt

last year, things are looking more promising this season. The photos tell the story so far. Fingers crossed for a successful brood!



A second female occasionally appeared in late March, likely looking for a mate or a nest site. The trio briefly coexisted on top of the pole.



The pair on the right attacked the interloper and drove her away.

*Kestrel photos continued on Page 7.*



## 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 eco-tourism 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-



Blue-crowned Trogon 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 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](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net); 970-449-3645.

### FCAS Welcomes News and Renewing Members

Donald Beaver  
Linda Cashman  
Greg Cashman  
Scott Cobble  
Beth Dillion  
Irene Fortune  
Raymond & Joan M. Glabach  
Robert Gobeille  
Ruth Grant

Michelle Haefele & Mike Knowles  
Carole Hossan  
Joel Hurmence  
Janice Johnson  
Kathleen Hardy  
Sue Kenney  
Laurie Kleespies  
Tom Kleespies  
Ron & Marcia Maeda

Debra McGuinn  
Jesse Meschievitz  
William H. Miller  
David Otis  
Jodie Rankin  
Robert Righter  
Dan Teska  
Bobbie Tilmant  
Al Trask

Thank you for your membership! Your support makes our programs and conservation efforts possible and helps us achieve our mission of connection people to the natural world.



Male Kestrel on the left, female at right.  
Photos above and right by Doug Swartz.



We first checked the camera on March 29 and found the pair sleeping in the box at night. This has continued since. We're not yet "counting the chicks" though, as a lot has to go right for a happy outcome!



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.

- |                          |   |       |  |
|--------------------------|---|-------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member<br>Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email | \$ 20 | Name: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member<br>Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail  | \$ 30 | Address: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member<br>Receive FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail or email    | \$750 | City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Additional support for FCAS programs  | \$__  | Phone: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Additional support for Alex Cringan Fund<br>(natural history education grants)    | \$__  | Email: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New NAS member<br>Receive the NAS <i>Audubon</i> by mail                          | \$ 20 | May we send you FCAS email alerts if updates occur for field trips, programs, etc.? Yes or No                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Renewing NAS member<br>Receive the NAS <i>Audubon</i> by mail                     | \$ 35 | May we contact you for volunteer activities such as helping at 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).