

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 2020

Volume 51, Issue 3

FCAS Presents

**Accomplished Birders Dave Leatherman, Forest Entomologist
and Janeal Thompson, Award-winning Photographer
"Colorado Spiders, Their Wondrous Ways and Webs"**

Thursday, March 12

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

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

Spiders, like snakes, are an animal group of which humans seem instinctively afraid. That is unfortunate, because they truly are both remarkable and important. In this presentation perhaps both the presenters and the audience can step outside our respective comfort zones and delve into arachnids. The presenters are admittedly not spider experts.

Janeal Thompson has a farming/ranching background in southeastern Colorado. She is an award-winning photographer smitten by spiders as a subject. She confesses some still "give her cause for pause."



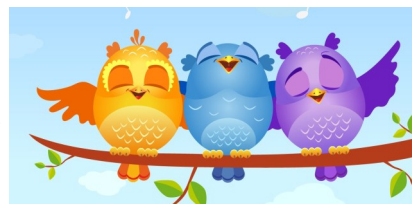
Bold Jumper Spider by Janeal Thompson.

Dave Leatherman is a trained forest entomology and lifelong birder.

Join us as we learn together about the amazing substance called silk, web construction, eye patterns, and spider sex. We will discuss spiders doing photo shoots with bicyclists, winning contests, and stoking urban legends. Be open to personal "spider therapy" by coming forward when we invite the congregation to hold a tarantula.

Join us on March 12 at the Fort Collins Senior Center for this program that 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 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 it, please support your local chapter and subscribe. See details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.



I used to have a boss who was fond of saying, "know your limitations." One of my limitations is that I don't have much skill, or interest, in using social media to engage with my friends and family. This limitation extends, unfortunately, to my leadership of FCAS. So, I'm asking for help.

I'm hoping to find a volunteer or an unpaid intern who would be willing to elevate FCAS through creative and strategic uses of social media. We currently have a Facebook page, but use it sparingly. We aren't on Instagram at all. I think if we hope to remain relevant to people under the age of 40, FCAS has to adapt to the times and use these kinds of tools to connect our members and recruit new members—especially younger members. Perhaps more importantly, we need to foster an enduring appreciation throughout the community for birds and other wildlife, and spark a greater devotion to protecting and enhancing the habitats on which they depend. Social media can help—but I'm just not the guy to get it done.

Do you spend lots of your spare time on social media platforms? Would you be willing to volunteer some of your time to get us started on Instagram and improve our use of Facebook? Or, if this isn't right for you, do you know someone who might be interested? Ideally, I'd like to find a volunteer who is able to start with some very basic guidance from me and then run with it.



Unfortunately, FCAS can't afford to pay for this service, but I would do everything I can to help our volunteer get school credit, or a boost to their resume, or a personal recommendation. Please contact me directly (johnshenot@gmail.com) if you might be interested, or pass this information along to the social media mavens in your life.

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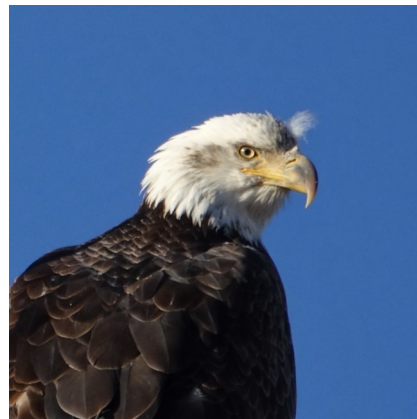
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For other FCAS contacts visit

www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

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



Bad hair day for this Bald Eagle.
Photo by Doug Swartz.

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

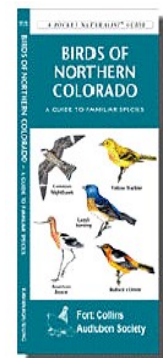
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



“Patriotism means to stand by the country. It does not mean to stand by the president or any other public official, save exactly to the degree in which he himself stands by the country. It is patriotic to support him insofar as he efficiently serves the country. It is unpatriotic not to oppose him to the exact extent that by inefficiency, or otherwise, he fails in his duty to stand by the country. In either event, it is unpatriotic not to tell the truth, whether about the president or anyone else.” —*Theodore Roosevelt (from the article, “Lincoln and Free Speech,” published in May, 1918, in Metropolitan Magazine)*

A New Hope for the Future: Restoring Habitat

The basis for this month’s article is a review of a relatively new book, *Nature’s Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*, written by Douglas W. Tallamy. The book was reviewed by JoAnn Hackos of Evergreen Audubon, and distributed to current and former members of the Audubon Colorado Council (ACC).

In *Nature’s Best Hope*, Tallamy makes a strong case for changing the way we view native and alien plant species in North America and around the world. He tells us that “our relationship with the earth is broken,” and that “... we need a new conservation toolbox....”

Most of us are probably familiar with the September 19 *Science* report that reported the loss of 3 billion birds in North America since 1970. Tallamy writes that these losses will continue unless we change how we manage the land to support plant, insect, bird, and animal diversity. He talks about habitat fragmentation that frequently “reduces small populations to zero....”



Two-tailed Swallowtail and Monarch on Echinacea by Bill Miller.

Studies show that even habitats that seem large enough to protect a species are not adequate. Even our western national park system has been insufficient to protect our western birds. Instead, we need to restore habitat where we live, not just in our park system. It’s our best hope for developing a sustainable world.

Tallamy points out that we have far too much Kentucky bluegrass and other turf grass lawns. “Turf grass has replaced diverse native plant communities... in more than 40 million acres.” Sixty percent of our water in the west goes to watering lawns. Lawn fertilizers contaminate our water supplies. Lawns produce little atmospheric oxygen and fail to support native bees and other insects. Lawns are a dead zone.

An entire industry has evolved to introduce alien

plant species into our human habitats, also known as our cities, towns, and communities. The carrying capacity, or number of individuals that an ecosystem can sustain indefinitely, of our municipal environments is virtually nonexistent in almost all cases. Some species that can adapt to an urban environment, such as European Starlings, House Sparrows, and squirrels, do fairly well. But the diversity of species is mostly lacking.

If we do not use native plants in our landscaping we restrict the diversity of insect species that should be present to feed the birds that should normally be there. Tallamy points out that we need to be very careful about which plants we label weeds. Many native plants that support native species of insects and birds are erroneously labeled weeds by the horticulture industry or the cattle industry.

We also should encourage, nay, insist, that landowners and HOAs be frugal in their mowing in mistaken attempts to achieve a manicured look. Mowing in late fall removes the dead stalks of the grasses, but it also destroys native bees and other insects that winter in the dead stalks. It destroys the eggs of insects, the chrysalises of swallowtails, and the cocoons of moths. “Fall mowing also eliminates the seeds that goldfinches, sparrows, and juncos rely on all winter long.”

Tallamy provides a list of the actions to restore the natural world: (a) shrink the lawn; (b) remove invasive species; (c) plant keystone genera (native plants); (d) plant for specialist pollinators (like milkweed for Monarch butterflies); (e) network with neighbors; (f) build a conservation hardscape by installing window well covers; (g) don’t mow at dusk, and set a mower (if you have to mow) at four inches; (h) install a bubbler; (i) install several small bee hotels, not big ones; (j) do not spray or fertilize; (k) treasure your needles; and (l) educate your neighborhood association and rewrite the rules.



Bumble Bee on Bee Plant by Bill Miller.



March Mélange of News

In mid-February I attended a protest in downtown Denver by Native Americans and environmental activists against the weakening of the National Environ-



Native American speaker at Denver protest against weakening NEPA
by Carole Hossan.

mental Policy Act (NEPA). Across the street, a hearing on weakening NEPA was being held; the first of only two hearings on this crucial act. The second hearing will be held in Washington, D.C. Despite the extremely cold temperature and ice on the ground, a

crowd listened attentively to speakers whose lives will be negatively impacted if NEPA is weakened. Many of them live near fracking operations.

On a brighter note, Britain's science fantasy "Dr. Who" television series recently aired an episode titled "Praxeus," which explored the degradation of our environment. The reason I ironically call it brighter is because that episode was educational—it shows a gyre of trash (a gyre is a large-scale system of a circular oceanic current). There are vortexes of trash that degrade into microplastics within these gyres; the most famous of these concentrations is often called the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch." The episode also features a murmuration of crow-like birds that swoop down to attack people who are on a beach. A murmuration is a mass of a species of bird, usually starlings, flying in swooping, intricately coordinated patterns through the sky. While various bird species will attack humans close to their nests—and I found one instance of crows attacking cars on a highway—I was not able to find any information about birds murmuring and subsequently attacking humans. A video that shows and explains a starling murmuration can be found at <https://>

www.youtube.com/watch?v=34jaUM6eqb4.

In the science fantasy program, the doctor and her young adult companions dissect a dead attack bird. They found that the bird had ingested a large amount of micoplastics, causing the bird's immune system to attack itself. The result was the bird appeared "mad." A positive aspect of "Praxeus" is that it entertainingly educates adolescents—the typical audience for Dr. Who—about the garbage patches in the gyres. Hopefully the program will encourage young people to become environmental stewards and learn to carefully recycle plastic items so that the detritus does not end up in one of the garbage patches.

In yet more news, I recently read there is one-third more environmental damage than originally estimated from the Deep-water Horizon British Petroleum oil spill in 2010. I also heard that the Trump administration will lower funding for national parks. It is a tragedy for us and those who come after us that our government, as well as the most other governments, does not think ahead, as the Native American Indians did, for the well-being of future generations.



Gyr Falcon by Richard Herrington.

To conclude on a positive note, the following is a link to a detailed article about falconry that includes our recent rare visitor, the Gyr Falcon: <https://tinyurl.com/tmtwj92>.



American Goldfinch by Ron Harden.

Canada Geese by Ann Kramer.



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 (Sirena Brownlee, sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com) or the trip leader named 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 or our Facebook page for more information and updates. RSVP strongly encouraged.

Saturday, March 7, Running Deer Natural Area. Leader: Robert Beauchamp, tyrannusb@gmail.com. We will explore a few marshes and ponds during this 1.5–2-mile saunter through the natural area. All levels are welcome. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot. No need to RSVP.

Sunday, March 8, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com, 970-669-1185 or 669-8095. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the City of



Bald Eagle by Ron Harden.

Fort Collins on the second Sunday of each month. All levels are welcome. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot.

Saturday, March 28, Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area. Leader: Nolan Bunting, nolanbunting@hotmail.com. Join Nolan for a walk along the Cattail Flats trail for waterfowl and Bald Eagle viewing. Plan for a 2-mile walk on the trails. All levels are welcome and a spotting scope will be available. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

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.

Diane Adams	Ruth Grant	Tom Kleespies	Lynette Seymour
Dorothy L. Adel	Kathleen Hardy	Fred Kreiner	Patricia Sowby
Jim & Darla Anderson	Melannie Hartman	Jane M. Low	Richard Strong
Eileen & Bryan Baker	Michele Hattman	Larry Moskowitz	Susan Taigman
Judith Ann Balice	Vicki Helton	Lori Nixon	Amy Tamlin
Denise A. Bretting	Clifford Hendrick	John Oberle	Beverly J. Taylor
Linda Cashman	Dorothy Hudson	Jerry Partin	Daniel Teska
Morris Clark	Alecia Hunter	Merry Popa	Edith B. Thompson
Agnes Day	Cynthia Jacobson	Judith D. Putnam	Al Trask
Beth Dillon	Carol Jones	MJ Redman	Kay Ward
Kim Dunlap	Nancy Jones	Ann Reichhardt	James C. Weis
Danny Feig-Sandoval	Julia J. Jordan	John Reichhardt	William West
Martin Forstenzer	Laurie Kleespies	Richard Roberts	



American Dipper (left).

Great Horned Owls (right)

Photos by Doug Swartz.



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
Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email | \$ 20 | Name: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member
Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail | \$ 30 | Address: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member
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
(natural history education grants) | \$ ____ | Email: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New NAS member
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
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.