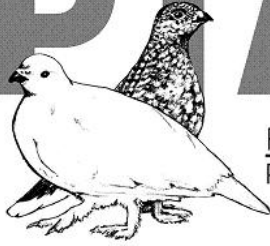


# PTARMIGAN



FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 271968 • Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968 • [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon)

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

April 2009

Volume 40, Issue 8

## *Elk and Vegetation Management at Rocky Mountain National Park – Planning and Implementation*

After seven years of research and modeling, the elk population in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) and the Estes Park valley was found to be larger, less migratory, and more concentrated than it would be under natural conditions. Aspen and montane riparian willow communities support high levels of biodiversity compared to other habitat types in the park and elk have been found to heavily use these habitats on core winter range. As a result, these communities are declining where elk concentrate.



John Mack, Branch Chief of Natural Resources at Rocky Mountain National Park, will make a presentation that will briefly review the elk and vegetation management plan process, objectives, plan selected for RMNP, and provide an update on continuing research and project implementation.

We encourage you to join Fort Collins Audubon for this opportunity to acquire more information and understanding of this management plan that is of importance about wildlife in our area.

**THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAM — April 9,, 2009**  
**Columbine Room, Fort Collins Lincoln Center, 417 W. Magnolia Street**  
**Social Gathering: 7:00 p.m., Program: 7:30 p.m.**

**And Don't Miss our Program in Loveland on Thursday, April 23rd**  
**“Nebraska Sandhills: Sea of Grass,” Presented by Stephen Jones**  
**See Page 3 for more details.**

FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Visit our website at [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon) or call 970-490-BIRD.

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## Field Trips, Programs, Classes, and Events



**4/11/09, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural Area Tour.** 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Arapaho Bend Natural Area. Exploring nature continues with a new schedule of 2nd Saturday adventures. This year we will explore twelve of Fort Collins' natural areas. Each tour will be led by a master naturalist who will explain "What's special about this place?" All tours are from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. For further information, contact Joann Thomas at 970/482-7125 or email at [jthomas91@aol.com](mailto:jthomas91@aol.com).

**4/12/09, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting ([dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com), work: 669-1185, or home: 669-8095). Meet at 7:00 am. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed.

**4/18 Saturday 9-12. Natural Areas Cleanup**  
Leader: Bill Miller, 493-7693, [5mcorp@comcast.net](mailto:5mcorp@comcast.net). Begins at 9:00 AM and should be done before noon. We will meet at the wide spot on the south side of Trilby Road, just east of the railroad trestle, and almost a half-mile west of S. Timberline Road. Bring work gloves, water, and a hat. See Page 7 for details.

**4/25/09, Saturday. Birding trip to Southwest Loveland Lakes.** Leader: Connie Kogler. We will meet at the Starbucks on 1317 Eagle Dr. Loveland at 8:00 a.m.. From there we will carpool and explore lakes and some river spots in this area of Loveland. Larimer County Parks Pass needed for cars. Bring lunch and water, and be prepared for the weather. Contact Connie @ [ZBlueHeron@gmail.com](mailto:ZBlueHeron@gmail.com)

**5/2/09, Saturday. Fort Collins Area Migrants and Summer Residents.** 7:15 - 11:00 a.m. Leader: Eric DeFonso. Meet at the Maxwell Natural Area parking lot across the road from Pine Ridge Natural Area, better known as Dixon Reservoir. We will focus on finding resident and passage migrants in local area hot spots - we may also head to other spots out of town if we get word of interesting activity there. All

levels welcome. To sign up or get more information, contact Eric DeFonso by email at [yoericd@yahoo.com](mailto:yoericd@yahoo.com) or by phone at (970)-472-1761.

**5/9/09, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural Area Tour.** 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. To be announced. Exploring nature continues with a new schedule of 2nd Saturday adventures. This year we will explore twelve of Fort Collins' natural areas. Each tour will be led by a master naturalist who will explain "What's special about this place?" All tours are from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. For further information, contact Joann Thomas at 970/482-7125 or email at [jthomas91@aol.com](mailto:jthomas91@aol.com).

**5/10/09, Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting ([dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com), work: 669-1185, or home: 669-8095). Meet at 7:00 am. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed.

**5/15-5/17, Friday-Sunday, Birdathon**  
The Birdathon is Fort Collins Audubon's annual spring fundraiser. It is also a great birding and social get-together that is an enjoyable—if exhausting—24-hour search for birds. It is a fun way to help raise money for Fort Collins Audubon, too! See Page 3 for details.

**5/29-5/31, Friday-Sunday, White River Canoe Trip.** There are seats still available on our 3-day canoe trip on the White River in Utah. See Page 6 for details.

**7/13, Wildlife Habitat Garden Tour**  
The 2009 Wildlife Habitat Garden Tour will be held on Saturday, June 13, 2009 - 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. See Page 5 for details

**8/7-8/9, Friday-Sunday, Colorado River Kayak Trip.** There are still seats available on our 3-day kayak trip on the Colorado River near Fruita. See Page 6 for details.

All field trips are free of charge (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Participants should dress appropriately for the weather. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Carpooling is encouraged. A \$3 (unless otherwise noted) contribution per passenger to the driver is suggested. Visit [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon) for more information. Please contact the trip leader for sign up and trip details. Field Trip Coordinator: Eric DeFonso, [yoericd@yahoo.com](mailto:yoericd@yahoo.com) or 970-472-1761.



## “Nebraska Sandhills: Sea of Grass”

Presented by Photographer and Author Stephen Jones

Sponsored by Fort Collins Audubon Society

Thursday, April 23, 2009

LOVELAND MUSEUM/GALLERY

503 N. Lincoln Ave-Loveland

(corner of Fifth & Lincoln-Downtown Loveland)

Program with Refreshments beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Encompassing more than 20,000 square miles, the Nebraska Sandhills comprise the largest remaining expanse of mixed-grass and tallgrass prairie in North America. Sharp-tailed grouse, long-billed curlews, and badgers roam the hills; while bald eagles, trumpeter swans, and black terns nest around thousands of shallow lakes and ponds. With a human population of less than one inhabitant per square mile, the Sandhills resemble the prairie as it must have



Photo by Stephen Jones – Niobrara River (Nebraska)

appeared to the Cheyenne, Pawnee, and Lakota. A trip through the Sandhills is a journey back into a simpler time, when humans lived in harmony with nature.

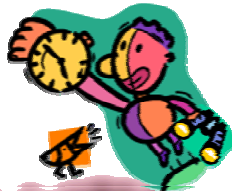
Stephen Jones, author and photographer, will lead us on a lyrical trip through the Sandhills, by combining striking images, music, natural sounds, stories, and Plains Indian mythology. You won't want to miss this event!

## Fort Collins Audubon ANNUAL BIRDATHON!

By Connie Kogler - Birdathon Coordinator

This year's event is taking place in any 24-hour period from Friday, May 15th, 5:00 p.m. through Sunday, May 17th 5:00 p.m.

The Fort Collins Audubon Society is looking for dozens of teams to field and find birds in a 24 hour period for our biggest fundraising event of the year. Money we raise helps finance our local conservation projects, scholarships, education and programs. ANYONE can participate! Form a team that fits your personality, skill, and style with a few good friends, your company, or co-workers. Get pledges - either fixed sum or per species - and on the Birdathon day get out, have fun, and count birds.



# BIRDATHON

- No time? How about a lunch hour count?
- No car? How about a biking or walking count?
- No motivation? How about a patio-porch count?
- No Friends? Sign up and we'll get you on a team!

Teams must be registered, earn pledges and count in Colorado to compete for prizes and attend the Birdathon Celebration Dinner, on Sunday, May 17th, 7:00 p.m. For more information on how you can participate, sponsor a team, or support the dinner, visit our website: [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon) or contact Birdathon Organizer, Connie Kogler at 622-9710 or [zBlueHeron@gmail.com](mailto:zBlueHeron@gmail.com)

**See Next Page for Donation Form!**



## Education Corner

By Joann Thomas, Education Chair

Lagniappe...

Woe is me! I have just returned from New Orleans, my home, to discover that I had forgotten the deadline for Education Corner. Frantically, I sit without inspiration looking for my muse. The past several weeks have sped by in a blur. So many birds—so little time.



Beginning with the 4th Thursday in February on our monthly walk around Equalizer Pond were we saw a immature Bald Eagle and a pond filled with Redheads and culminating in New Orleans where I watched Bald Eagles, Buffleheads, Scaup, and Coots.

What does it all have in common? Movement, migration, and mating. All of these birds were in full plumage and mating behavior. Moreover, migration was in full swing.

What really tickled my fancy was the entry in Audubon's web site on Redheads. Thinking I would write a neat little article about parasitism, which is a way of life for this diving duck, I checked out my usually birding web sites. To my amazement, the article begins, "At New Orleans, this bird is commonly known by the name of "Dos Gris." Now I have just come from the land of "Laissez Les Bon Temps Roulez!" and they do! So now, I am really into this.

Lake Borgne, St. John, and Pontchartrain...that's home. And, it seems as though this duck appreciates

the fine dining in the south also. The author writes, "I have found their stomach crammed with young tadpoles and small water-lizards, as well as blades of the grasses growing around the banks... on several occasions, I have found pretty large acorns and beech-nuts in their throats, as well as snails, entire or broken, and fragments of the shells..."

Now I have just taken a week to recover from the joys of eating my way through New Orleans...Shrimp Etouffe, Oyster Loaf, Trout Almandine, Red Beans and Rice, Jambalaya, Gumbo, French bread, Beignets, Café au lait, Pralines, and on and on, so I identify with this duck. Such fond memories of family reunion, good food, and good birding!

During my visit, my son, a fledgling birder who is monitoring a Bald Eagle nest, took me to many hidden watery spots. We watched eight Buffleheads courting, one first winter Scaup feeding, and about 35 Coots courting. I realize now how much activity occurs in spring. From the south to the west, the birds are flocking, moving, courting, mating, nesting, and renewing life.

The Bald Eagle is sitting on a nest atop a Bald Cypress tree in a swamp only visible from a bridge on I-10. If you miss the sight, you have a 22-mile trip to turn around. We passed the spot about 10 times during my visit, but only saw the female once. She is sitting low in the nest, not always visible from the bridge.

It's going to be a great birding spring! I can feel it in my bones...or is that stomach!

### FCAS Birdathon Donation Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I want to pledge:

\_\_\_ A fixed amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ To provide incentive—an amount for each species identified by a team of your choice! Please pick the team you are sponsoring before the Birdathon day! \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per species, you pick the amount

\_\_\_ \$1.00 per species (I understand that the number of species is usually between 120 and 170).

Send to: Fort Collins Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 271968, Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968  
You may also donate online at [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon)



## Wildlife Habitat Garden Tour

Saturday, June 13, 2009

The Fort Collins Audubon Society's 2009 Wildlife Habitat Garden Tour will be held on Saturday, June 13, 2009 - 8:00 am to 3:00 pm.

We will tour 5 gardens that attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife through plants, design and structures, and consider how to create your own backyard wildlife habitat!



**We are looking for another garden and seeking volunteers for planning the tour and helping at the gardens on tour day.**

Contact 416-1881 or 970-490-BIRD.  
[www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon)



## The 2nd Annual Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival

Sponsored by JAX OUTDOOR GEAR

Jax Outdoor Gear brings some of the favorite films from the Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival, the largest environmental film festival in the United States to the Rialto on Friday, April 17th and to the CSU Lory Student Center Theatre on Wednesday, April 22nd to celebrate Earth Day.

Featured at the event in Fort Collins and Loveland are films that focus on water, forest, energy and climate change, conservation, community activism, agriculture as well as fun and adventure films celebrating the environment.

The Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival leaves you feeling inspired and motivated to go out and make a difference in your community and the world. As past participants will affirm - and newcomers will discover - the festival has always focused on hope, profiling one community after another that are working together to solve local environmental issues and to contribute to global solutions.

### List of 2009 Films:

180° SOUTH, Homegrown Revolution, Brower Youth Awards: Phebe Meyers & Jessie-Ruth Corkins, National Sacrifice Zone: Colorado & The Cost of Energy Independence,

A Rivers Last Breath, Goldfish, I Love Trash, Litterball, The Good Life, Hard Rock Mining,

Roadless is More, AK the Hard Way, Global Focus - Belgium, StreetFilms: Intersection Repair

### EVENT DETAILS:

#### Where/When:

**Rialto Theater**, 228 E. 4th Street, Loveland, CO.

April 17, 2009. Enviro Fair starts at 5:30 pm and films start at 6:30 pm.

**Lory Student Center Theater**, Fort Collins CO.

April 22, 2009. Enviro Fair starts at 5:30 pm and films start at 6:30 pm.

**Ticket Prices:** \$8.00 adults; \$4.00 Seniors, Students & Children

All tickets are General Admission.

**How to Buy Tickets:** On-line at  
[www.jaxmercantile.com](http://www.jaxmercantile.com)

Jax Outdoor Gear, 1200 N College Ave., Fort Collins, CO. 970-221-0544

Jax Outdoor Gear • Ranch & Home, 950 E Eisenhower, Loveland, CO 970-776-4540

CSU Student Center Box Office

Rialto Theatre Box Office or online at  
[www.ci.loveland.co.us/rialto.com](http://www.ci.loveland.co.us/rialto.com)

For more information: [www.jaxmercantile.com](http://www.jaxmercantile.com); 970-488-3250 ext 749



## Fort Collins Audubon River Trips for 2009

There are still spaces available on the Fort Collins Audubon Society river trips scheduled for May and August 2009. **Be sure to sign up now before seats are opened to the general public!** Details are available at [www.fortnet.org/audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/audubon) and [www.centennialcanoe.com](http://www.centennialcanoe.com).



### The White River by Canoe

**Date: May 29-31 (Fri-Sun), 2009**

**Cost: \$320 adult, \$280 child (age 6-16)**

**Level: Beginner / Intermediate**

When you canoe Utah, you won't soon forget it. The White River, flowing westward 34 miles from Bonanza, Utah, near the Colorado and Utah border, has been referred to as the best canoeing in Utah. It is certainly the most remote wilderness area of any flat-water river stretch in the West. Few boaters have discovered the wild and secluded beauty of a Utah canoe trip through the White River Canyon. Wildlife abounds, including wild horse herds, antelope, deer and beaver. Fantastic hiking awaits you at the unusual geologic formations of Goblin City. Before or after your trip, you may wish to hike into Fantasy Canyon or Devil's Playground, featuring other unique rock formations. The water on the White River is generally smooth with occasional rapids up to Class I in difficulty. Excellent camping is found in the cottonwood groves along the river.

### The Colorado River by Sea Kayak

**Date: August 7-9 (Fri-Sun), 2009**

**Cost: \$335 adult, \$280 child (ages 6-16)**

**Level: Beginner**

The sea kayak trip from Fruita, Colorado (about 13 miles west of Grand Junction, Colorado), covers a 30-mile stretch of the Colorado River to Westwater, Utah. This spectacular canyon country of the Colorado Plateau, including Ruby and Horsethief Canyons, features majestic walls of red sandstone and offers some of the best paddling in Colorado. The river is gentle with occasional small Class I+ rapids to add spice to the journey. Roads do not bound this portion of the river and the steep-walled canyons are

accessible only from the river, giving the area a true wilderness setting. This stretch of river can easily be navigated in a sea kayak.

These two-person sea kayaks are 16-feet long and are very comfortable and stable. Sleeker than a canoe, they will also travel faster. The only thing you'll need to carry in your kayak is a camera and water bottle. All of your camping and personal gear will be transported down river on the support raft.

You'll be amazed at stands of shiny granite sculpted by water through the ages while paddling or floating in your lifejacket past the remnants of ancient metamorphic rock called Black Rock. Camping along the river's banks, exploring a natural amphitheater with ancient Indian rock art or hiking into deep box canyons will leave you awed by the immensity of geologic time and the silence of the wilderness.

### How to Sign Up

Centennial Canoe Outfitters

([www.centennialcanoe.com](http://www.centennialcanoe.com)) will provide all safety equipment, river guides, canoes and great food. The cost of each trip includes a \$50 donation to FCAS. You will need to bring a sleeping bag, tent and basic personal supplies. The trip size is limited, so sign up early to reserve your place. A deposit of \$100 per person must accompany your reservation request (Visa and Mastercard accepted), and the balance is due 30 days before the trip. For further details and to register for the trip, contact Centennial Canoe Outfitters, 1-877-353-1850 (toll free) and be sure to tell them you heard about it from Fort Collins Audubon Society.





## Natural Areas Cleanup

April 18, 2009

Quite a few years ago Fort Collins Audubon Society "officially" adopted the Fossil Creek Wetlands Natural Area for the purposes of keeping trash and wind-blown debris picked up from it. We have not conducted a clean-up since November of 2006 and we suspect that at least once piece of errant paper has blown in since. Therefore we have scheduled a clean-up for Saturday, April 18th, 2009, with the following Saturday, April 25th, being a backup date in case of bad weather on April 18th.

The Clean-up will begin at 9:00 AM and we should be done before noon. We will meet at the wide spot on the south side of Trilby Road, just east of the railroad trestle, and almost a half-mile west of S. Timberline Road. Bring work gloves, water, and a hat. The Fort Collins Natural Areas Program will provide trash bags which they will later pick up after we fill them. Most of the stubborn stuff (old fence posts, corals, fence wire, etc.) has already been picked up in past clean-ups so there shouldn't be a need for any tools. Hope to see you out there on April 18th, at 9:00 a.m. Contact Bill Miller at [5mcorp@comcast.net](mailto:5mcorp@comcast.net) or 493-7693

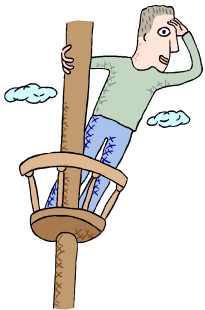
## Welcome new and renewing members!

We hope to see you at our programs and field trips.



John Giordanengo  
Diane Ostmeyer  
William Hurmence  
Kimberly Tamkun  
Rick Anderson  
Kaye Holman  
Jesse Meschievitz

Scott Scharf  
Alan Godwin  
Tom & Anne Butler  
Jacqueline A. Boss  
Philip R. Bigsby  
Bonnie Barton



## Looking Ahead to Programs

**April 23:** Fort Collins Audubon Society sponsored program, "Nebraska Sandhills: Sea of Grass," presented by Stephen Jones, Boulder County Audubon. This program combines striking images of birds, wildlife, music, natural sounds, stories, and Plains Indian mythology. Event to be held at the

**Loveland Museum**, Foote Gallery, in Loveland. Social time beginning at 6:30 p.m., Program at 7:00 p.m.

**May 14:** "Telling the Stories of Trees and Restoring Habitat," presented by Randy Moench, Manager of Colorado State Forest Service Nursery. This program will presented in our Fort Collins in our usual meeting place, **Columbine Room, Fort Collins Lincoln Center**, 417 W. Magnolia in Fort Collins. Social time begins at 7:00 p.m. and the program begins at 7:30 p.m.

## FCAS CONTACTS

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For other FCAS contacts visit

[www.fortnet.org/audubon/leadership.htm](http://www.fortnet.org/audubon/leadership.htm)

## Want less paper mail?

Get your newsletter online!

The current issue of the newsletter is available online to members only. If you'd like to receive an e-mail notification, please e-mail your **name and address as it appears on your newsletter's mailing label** and the e-mail address you wish to use to [shelagh.tupper@gmail.com](mailto:shelagh.tupper@gmail.com). Please indicate e-mail only or both e-mail and paper.

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**The White River by Canoe**  
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 Level: Beginner / Intermediate



See  
 Page 6!

**The Colorado River by Sea Kayak**  
 Date: August 7-9 (Fri-Sun), 2009  
 Cost: \$335 adult, \$280 child (ages 6-16)

### Membership Application

Join the Fort Collins Audubon Society (FCAS) directly, or automatically become a member by joining the National Audubon Society (NAS). *Choose one below:*

**New or Renewing Member of FCAS** (annual dues)     **\$15**  
 (Receive the *Ptarmigan* newsletter)  
 FCAS may share my name with NAS

**New Member of NAS & Chapter**     **\$20**  
 (Receive *Audubon* magazine and *Ptarmigan*)

**Renewing Member of NAS & Chapter**     **\$35**  
 (Receive *Audubon* magazine and *Ptarmigan*)

**Did you know?** Less than \$1 of your NAS dues is left for FCAS funds. FCAS serves NAS members through its own fundraising efforts. We appreciate your financial support!

**Additional donation to FCAS**     \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total enclosed**     \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to receive the *Ptarmigan* via the FCAS website.  
 Please e-mail me when posted.

Please make your check payable to **FCAS** and send along with this form to: **Fort Collins Audubon Society, PO Box 271968, Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968**

**FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY PROGRAMS AND  
 FIELD TRIPS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**  
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