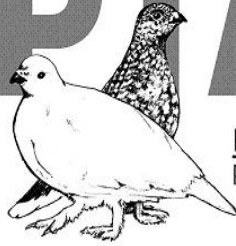


PTARMIGAN



FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 271968 • Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968 • www.fortnet.org/Audubon

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

November 2009

Volume 40, Issue 13

Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Program*

Always considered elusive and rare, black-footed ferrets were not officially recognized by scientists until 1851 when described in a book by naturalist John James Audubon and the Reverend John Bachmann from a single specimen found near the lower waters of the Platte River. They were not mentioned again by science until 1857. Today, black footed ferrets are one of the most endangered mammals in the world. Fragmented habitat, conversion of native grassland to intensive agricultural uses, widespread prairie dog eradication programs, fatal disease plague, and natural predators have all contributed to the plight of these of 18- to 24-inch long mammals highly specialized to a diet of

prairie dogs and to sheltering in prairie dog burrows.

In 1996, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established a Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Implementation Team



Black Footed Ferret Photo by Paul Marinari

(BFFRIT) to help guide recovery efforts. The BFFRIT includes representatives from federal and state governments, Native American tribes, zoos, and conservation organizations. The BFFRIT mission reads:

"Through a team effort, the involved agencies and partners on the Black-Footed

Ferret Recovery Implementation Team will promote strategic public awareness, understanding, and support resulting in

(continued on Page 2)

The Fort Collins Audubon Society is featuring the Ferret Recovery Program on:
Thursday, November 12

Social hour begins 7:00 p.m.

Presentation: 7:30 p.m.

Fort Collins Lincoln Center-Columbine Room, 417 W Magnolia St, Fort Collins, CO
Programs and field trips are free and open to the public.

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www.fortnet.org/audubon/leadership.htm

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the successful recovery of the black-footed ferret and the conservation of the ecosystem upon which it depends." By the year 2010, biologists hope to have 1,500 ferrets established in the wild, with no fewer than



30 breeding adults in each population. If these objectives are met, the ferret could be down listed from endangered to threatened status.

Paul Marinari has been the on-site facility manager of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Black-Footed Ferret Conservation Center in northern Colorado since 1996. Paul who says, "Every day the animals will find some new way to surprise you," will speak from his nearly two decades of experience, working with the Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Program.

*Info compiled from www.blackfootedferret.org/

Conservation Corner _____ by Bill Miller

“I do not think the measure of a civilization is how tall its buildings of concrete are, but rather how well its people have learned to relate to their environment and fellow man.”
-- *Sun Bear (1929-1992) of the Chippewa Tribe*

“We are not going to be able to operate our Spaceship Earth successfully nor for much longer unless we see it as a whole spaceship and our fate as common. It has to be everybody or nobody.” -- *Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983): American engineer, inventor, designer, architect of the geodesic dome.*

“In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create but by what we refuse to destroy.” -- *John Sawhill (1936- 2000): former president and CEO of [The Nature Conservancy](#) and the 12th President of [New York University](#).*

What Legacy Do We Leave For Future Generations?

The quotation above by John Sawhill pretty much sums up the underlying belief of most environmental and/or conservation organizations. Just what do we leave for our descendants? Just how much will we alter or consume with our current technologies, mindsets, greed, and incomplete thinking?

One way to leave something for future gen-

without the threat of future development. This often happens when owners decide to retire or discontinue using their land. Often those lands have intrinsic values in the form of wildlife habitat, unique scenery, or other characteristics. When children of the current owners have either no interest in continuing the historic use of the property or can't



Photo courtesy of Legacy Land Trust

erations and create a “legacy” is through a land trust. Land trusts protect land by purchasing the development rights on properties so as to allow existing uses of the land to continue

afford the inheritance taxes, a land trust can step in to protect the land.

Normally FCAS doesn't promote membership
(continued on page 4)



(Conservation—continued from Page 3)
in other organizations. Because of our IRS 501(c)(3) status we cannot make financial contributions to organizations without the same IRS status, but every once in a while it makes sense to plug another organization when their goals coincide with ours. Such is the situation with Legacy Land Trust (LLT).

The following is an article submitted by Jane Clark, Development Director of the LLT. The LLT was established in the 1990s as the Larimer Land Trust, but changed its name to Legacy Land Trust in 2001 after expanding its efforts to protect land in another county.



Land trusts provide habitat. Photo courtesy of Legacy Land Trust.

Legacy Land Trust is a locally created and governed, land conservation organization that protects special places for the benefit of everyone in northern Colorado.

Legacy Land Trust protects special places in their existing or revitalized state. Founded in 1993, Legacy Land Trust protects working farms and ranches in Larimer, Jackson, and Weld counties. It also protects wildlife and plant habitat to maintain the area's natural heritage.

These protected lands support myriad bird species. For instance, the 13,268-acre Eagle Rock Ranch project, completed in 2007 in Weld County, protects shortgrass prairie habitat that supports declining grassland birds such as Mountain Plover and McCown's Longspur. Completion of that

project included a neo-tropical migratory songbird grant that protected a corresponding amount of acreage in those birds' wintering grounds in Mexico. Another example is the recently completed 982-acre Stonewall Creek Ranch project in Larimer County, which includes wetlands

and grasslands supporting habitat for over 300 bird species.

When considering how local land use patterns have evolved over the past 50 years, it is clear that quality plant and wildlife habitat must be preserved now to ensure that such habitat remains intact for future generations.

The lands protected by Legacy Land Trust increase habitat viability for all wildlife. The protected lands also provide air and water purification, habitat for pollinators, and other beneficial natural elements.

Legacy Land Trust is northern Colorado's local land conservation organization that looks toward the future. The Trust welcomes your involvement and investment of time and financial capacity. Please help protect the important landscapes of northern Colorado communities with your membership. In the effort to help create a legacy of protected lands, every membership is important. Join at www.legacylandtrust.org.

Legacy Land Trust is located at 214 S. College Ave., Fort Collins, 970-407-1434.



You Can Never Know Too Much

On arriving in Fort Collins in September 1999, I immediately set out to create a birding life. Having spent years transferring around the United States, I always found birders to be friendly and helpful in



Kevin Cook and Joann Thomas atop Loveland Pass on Sept. 26, 2009.

my acclimation to a new community.

I found two treasured friends that first year. On one outing, a woman and I found common interests and she offered to go on a whole day of birding to the east.

I thought I'd moved to Colorado for the mountains, but then, I'd never seen the grasslands. I fell in love! Jane Householder showed me birds that day I'd never seen before that close. We watched seven pelicans swimming in a synchronized ballet of feeding. I learned later that pelicans participate in cooperative feeding by herding the fish with the shadows of their wings.

At the same time, I'd read about classes with a local birder offered in the evenings at Jax. Jax had already become my second home (it still is!), so after calling the man who said he only answered the phone in the afternoon, I began what has become a lifetime passion: classes with Kevin Cook. You'd think that after 10 years, I'd heard it all. Not so; I am still learning. That's why I was excited

when Kevin sent me the new class schedule. He's recognized the need for a class for "longtime beginners"—a category with which I identify.

In September I was greatly privileged to assist Kevin with an Elderhostel held at Pingree Park for which Jane Householder was the host. That first night as we sat by the fire in the lodge, I felt extremely gratified and, well, happy. The Elderhostel group was congenial and when we introduced ourselves, I told the story of my two friends and how 10 years ago, I'd begun a new life here in Fort Collins. It was a very special evening; I think I glowed more than the fire. As John Denver sings in one of his songs, "It's a good life, all in all." And, it is.

I invite you to join me in Kevin's classes this fall. We longtime beginners can have some fun, learn more about the birds, and maybe talk Kevin into some field trips. See you at Jax!

Schedule for Kevin Cook's Classes at Jax

Oct 28: Birding for New Beginners

For people new to birds and birding. Will cover basics such as classification, names, field guide types and usage, bird finding, ID protocols, how to be certain of identifications, binoculars, and related topics. Special emphasis will be placed on skills development.

Nov 4: Birding for Longtime Beginners

For more experienced birders who would like greater accomplishment from their time spent birding. Special emphasis will be placed on refining and honing observation skills.

Nov 11: Hawks

Nov 18: Gulls

Dec 2: Sparrows and Finches

Dec 9: Waterfowl

Dec 16: Specialty Birding

This session will list a few species and explain how to find them deliberately.

All sessions held at JAX Outdoor, 1200 N. College Ave., in the Conference Room, 6:30 p.m., \$7 per person per session.

For reservations, call Kevin at 223-8392.



Upcoming Field Trips



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 \$3.00 (unless otherwise specified) contribution per passenger is suggested. Visit www.fortnet.org/Audubon for more information. For all field trips and surveys, please contact the trip leader for signup and trip details.

November 8, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey

Leader: Denise Bretting
dbretting@swloveland.com, work: 970-669-1185 or home: 970-669-8095. Meet at 7:00 a.m. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed and encouraged.

December 13, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey

Leader: Denise Bretting
dbretting@swloveland.com, work: 970-669-1185 or home: 970-669-8095. Meet at 7:00 a.m. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city of Fort Collins. All levels welcomed and encouraged.

Christmas Potluck

In lieu of a December program, FCAS holds a potluck dinner and slide show. The slide show is presented by members who also happen to be photographers. This year's potluck will be Dec. 10. Please bring a dish to feed at least four people, as well as any necessary serving utensils and your own table service.

The potluck will be held at the large conference room located in the Fort Collins Streets Department, located in the old sugar beet mill just south of Vine Drive and the Burlington-Santa Fe railroad tracks. More directions coming in the December issue of the *Ptarmigan*.

Doors open at 6:00 p.m., dinner begins at 6:30, and the show begins at 7:00. There is a PowerPoint projector in the facility, but let Bill Miller (5mcorp@comcast.net) know if you need a slide projector.

WANTED: Board Members, Committee Members Fort Collins Audubon Needs You!

FCAS will be electing board members in January, as well as recruiting for various committees.

We need your help!

Consider serving on the board, serving on the nominating committee, or suggesting people you know are willing to be involved - including yourself.

Please contact Ruth Grant: 970-225-0673 or rabgrant@aol.com.





2009 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Once again FCAS will sponsor the Fort Collins Christmas Bird Count (CBC), the longest continuous CBC in Colorado. The event takes place Saturday, Dec. 19.

The CBC is conducted inside a 15-mile diameter circle with its center located at the intersection a mile north of U.S. Hwy 287. Habitat types included within this circle are the urban areas of the northern part of Fort Collins, most of Horsetooth Reservoir north of Spring Canyon Dam, most of Lory State Park, the lower parts of both Rist and Poudre Canyons, most of the reservoirs to the north side of Fort Collins, the town of Wellington, and almost to the Larimer-Weld County line in the east. The count coordinator divides the area into segments, some of which have been counted by the same individuals and/or teams for many years.

The data collected by count participants consists of species as well as the best estimate of the numbers of individuals of a species. The data are forwarded to the National Audubon Society (NAS) that publishes the data. The data illustrates the trends in bird populations, such as numbers and where they winter. Using CBC data, NAS recently reported that the winter ranges of various bird species is moving northward as a result of the earth's warming temperatures.

Many people are needed for this important data-collecting effort. You do not have to be an expert birder to participate because you can be matched with more experienced team leaders. This is an excellent way to learn of new birding locations and also to learn more about the species that winter around Fort Collins.

To participate, please contact Nick Komar at quetzal65@comcast.net for details.



Quarters only, no dollar coins.

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

Bath Garden
Center & Nursery
2000 E. Prospect
(970) 484-5022

Jax Outdoor Gear
1200 N. College
(970) 221-0544

Jax Farm & Ranch
1000 N. Hwy. 287
(970) 484-2221

Ranch-Way Feeds
546 Willow St.
(970) 482-1662

The Matter Book-
Store/Bean Cycle
Coffee
144 N. College
(970) 472-4284





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Ptarmigan Goes Paperless

Beginning January 2010, the Fort Collins Audubon Society will offer the Ptarmigan monthly newsletter primarily ONLINE.

A monthly e-mail announcement will be sent out when the newsletter is posted on the website.

Please let us know your preference by one of the following:

EMAIL: FortCollinsAudubonMembership@gmail.com

PHONE: 970-490-2473

MAIL: send this form to FCAS PO Box 271968, Ft.Collins, CO 80527-1968

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Address _____
