

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.

February 2016

Volume 47, Issue 2

FCAS Presents

Eva Matthews, Hog Island Program Coordinator

"Project Puffin and the History of Hog Island"

Thursday, February 11

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

Social Time: 7 p.m.; Program 7:30 p.m.

Eva Matthews, program coordinator of Hog Island, Maine, will give a presentation on its history and how Audubon's Nature Study Camp there has become one of the nation's greatest environmental education centers. Past instructors at Hog Island include Roger Tory Peterson, Rachel Carson, and Kenn Kaufman. Matthews also will talk about Project Puffin, and how it interweaves with other seabird species research studies.



Puffin from the Audubon Puffin Project
<http://projectpuffin.audubon.org/>

Matthews has a 10-year career of teaching environmental science to students across the Southeast and a particular interest in volunteer management. She holds degrees in environmental science and recreation and parks management. In her free time, Matthews loves to travel, spend time with her shelter pups, and partake in friendly birding competitions with her friends.

Join us on Feb. 11 at the Fort Collins Senior Center for this program that is free and open to the public.

Welcome New National Members

FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending one complimentary copy of our newsletter. We invite you to 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 the newsletter, so to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan*, please subscribe to the newsletter. See the details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.

President's Corner

by John Shenot

At our January meeting, the membership elected several officers and at-large board members to one-year terms. All of the people elected were either incumbent board members or had previously served on the board. I want to thank everyone who volunteered for these leadership positions. Following the elections, and with the new board's approval, I appointed chairpersons for most of the standing committees named in our chapter bylaws. Committee chairs also serve one-year terms and sit on the board of directors. We still have a few vacancies I would like to fill, but I'm confident that FCAS is poised for success in 2016 with the following leadership:

President/Field Trip Chair, John Shenot; President-Elect, vacant; Vice-President/Membership Chair, Liz Pruessner; Treasurer/Finance Chair, John Waddell; Secretary, Scott Cobble; At-large Director/Hospitality Chair, Hildy Morgan; At-large Director/Audubon Colorado Council Delegate, Bill Miller; At-large Directors, Alan Godwin, Ron Harden, two vacancies; Program/Public Relations Chair, Jessie Meschievitz; Conservation Chair, Barb Adams; Education and Publications Chairs, vacant.

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Visit us on Facebook:

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



Annual Legislative Forum

The annual legislative forum, sponsored by Audubon of Greater Denver and the Sierra Club Denver Metro Network, will be held 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 27, at First Plymouth Church, 3501 S. Colorado Boulevard, Denver (corner of Colorado and Hampden). Come meet other activists and learn about the hot environmental topics in this year's State Legislature.

The cost is \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. You can register and pay on line at www.denveraudubon.org/programs/local-field-trips, or call the Audubon office at 303-973-9530 to use a credit card, or send your check to: Audubon of Greater Denver, 9308 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Littleton, CO 80128.

This is an excellent way to learn how the political decision process operates in Colorado, and to meet other activists who help rein in runaway legislation.

**Start Your
Membership Now**

Reminder: FCAS Annual Membership Renewal

Memberships run from January to December, so please renew your FCAS membership for 2016. It's easy to renew online via PayPal at our website: www.fortcollinsaudubon.org or use the form on the back page of the *Ptarmigan* newsletter to renew by mail or at a program meeting. Dues are \$20 to receive the *Ptarmigan* electronically or \$30 for a printed copy through the mail. Membership and contributions are tax deductible. Thanks to all who have already sent in your renewals. We appreciate your support!



Green is the New Red for Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is big business and, as such, can impact the environment in big ways.

Consider the number of trees it takes to produce the more than a billion Valentine's Day cards that are exchanged each year, or the millions of heart-shaped cardboard boxes that hold the chocolates given on Valentine's Day. And don't forget the flowers. Valentine's Day is the top holiday for fresh flowers, red roses in particular. All those flowers had to be grown and shipped from all over the globe, requiring additional transportation and use of resources.

This year, when you see red, think green! Show some extra love for the environment when choosing Valentine's gifts. There are many ways to surprise loved ones with gifts that are eco-friendly. Think outside the (candy)box!

Choose cards made from recycled or tree-free paper. Consider sending e-cards. Even better, make your own cards filled with personal, heartfelt sentiments. Purchase local, fair-trade and/or organic chocolates. They're healthier for you and the environment. Forego fresh-cut flowers and

give a living houseplant. Studies have shown that living plants inside the home act as air purifiers,



From <http://uvassociates.in>

removing harmful toxins. How about planting a tree in a loved one's honor? As your love grows, the tree's growth can serve as a reminder. You'll also be helping the environment as trees provide

oxygen, help improve air quality, contribute to climate amelioration, provide valuable habitat for wildlife, conserve water, and help preserve soil. Spend time together in a park or natural area. Better yet, make a donation to FCAS on behalf of a loved one (<http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org/pages/donate.html>).

Go birding together! After all, Valentine's Day weekend is for the birds. Participate in Audu-



From <http://spokaneaudubon.org>

bon's 19th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count, which will be held February 12-15. "The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages birdwatchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at <http://birdcount.org>." (<https://www.audubon.org/content/about-great-backyard-bird-count>) Share your love of birding by helping to protect birds and the environment.

Do you normally make reservations for dinner out? Prepare a romantic dinner at home. You'll help the environment by driving less. Set the mood with Earth-friendly candles, and choose organic foods and wines. Preparing dinner at home is less costly, much less stress, and oh so private. After dinner—well, that's where you get to use your imagination.

This year, think green when you see red and make it a Valentine's Day that you'll remember for years to come. Be creative, and make it a special day full of fun and love.



Take A Walk On The Wildish Side

Greetings, birders, from an artist who loves to hike and observe nature, especially birds! I spent much of my childhood exploring the flora and fauna of a nearby gully, which ultimately be-

came part of the San Diego Freeway in Los Angeles. It was hard to choose between studying to become a zoologist or an artist; but art won. I graduated from California State University at Long Beach with a bachelor of fine arts degree. Short hikes matured into long hikes after training for my first marathon in 1999. My love of combining distance-walking with birding led to the following adventure.



Male Northern Pintail Ducks by Carole Hossan.

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My friend, Harry Rose, and I were inspired to take a walk along the South Platte River after reading a post on the co-birders email group by someone who had done the walk. (You can subscribe to "cobirders" by sending a blank email to: cobirders-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). The concept of walking alongside the South Platte River to view birds from Littleton to Denver, subsequently returning via light rail, was irresistible as well as environmentally friendly.

In early December, we drove to the Carson Nature Center, located in Littleton. We decided to park in the nearby RTD light rail parking lot (\$4 fee) because the Littleton/Mineral Avenue Station at the Nature Center's parking gates close at dusk. Our goal was to walk approximately 13

miles to Confluence Park in Denver, then walk to a light rail station to take the train back to the Littleton/Mineral Avenue Station and the RTD parking lot.

The weather was cloudy and cool, making conditions congenial for brisk walking. We paused to eat our sack lunches on a park bench with a view of the river. We viewed 26 species and hundreds of birds as we meandered along the cement path alongside the South Platte. A small sampling of waterfowl observed were three Northern Pintails, 300 Northern Shovelers, and 25 of my personal favorites, the Hooded Mergansers. Another treat seen was a Bald Eagle atop a tall pole. We were pleasantly surprised that our natural/urban-interfacing trek had been so fruitful.

The foliage was austere: muted colors and bare branches. The landscape varied from late autumnal to gritty as there was a short detour due to construction as we reached the edges of



Sleeping male Mallard and male Hooded Merganser by Carole Hossan.

Denver. We arrived in Confluence Park as dusk fell and high-fived. Next we were off to the light rail station at the Pepsi Center for our return to the Littleton/Mineral Avenue Station and our car waiting patiently in the RTD lot.



Fort Collins 2015 CBC—A Great Year for Firsts — By Tom Hall, Compiler

The Fort Collins 69th consecutive Christmas Bird Count on December 19 was a year of firsts.

Five species were seen for the first time on the count, which were as many firsts as in the prior nine years. New species included Blue-winged Teal, Red-necked Grebe, Bonaparte's Gull (count week), Yellow-throated Warbler, and Lazuli Bunting. The late Lazuli Bunting was seen at the Gardens at Spring Creek, an unbelievable find. High

counts were seen for 14 species, and included Sharp-shinned Hawk (15, up from 10), Virginia Rail (58, up from 42), Ring-billed Gull (411, up from 274), Lesser Black-backed Gull (two, up from one), Northern Pygmy-Owl (four, up from two), Northern Saw-whet Owl (13, up from three), Downy Woodpecker (68, up from 60), Blue Jay (383, up from 285), White-breasted Nuthatch (41, up from 38), Brown Creeper (42, up from 30), Marsh Wren (five, up from four), Yellow-rumped Warbler (six, up from three), White-crowned Sparrow (259, up from 202), and American Goldfinch (410, up from 374). A wee-hour hike in Lory State Park netted 10 Saw-whets

and three Pygmy Owls, a new high for those species. A gull roost and four grebes were seen at

Horsetooth Reservoir. Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen in several areas, a new high count of that species. Other highlights included a Spotted Sandpiper and four Eastern Bluebirds. In all, 29,000 individual birds were counted, a fairly low number resulting from the minimal number of waterfowl counted.



Yellow-throated Warbler by Dave Leatherman.

The biggest highlight was reaching 100 species on count day, and an additional six count-week species. Many of the species were a surprise, especially considering that Fort Collins had a week-long cold snap in early December; many of the species were neotropical migrants that should have departed the area a few months prior to the count. There were 71 participants and five feeder watchers that made extraordinary efforts to find birds. Temperatures and conditions were great. What an awesome day! Everyone's efforts were appreciated.



Quetzal Tours Costa Rica Birding Adventure

Join Quetzal Tours in a tropical birding adventure to Costa Rica, April 4-13, led by master birding guide Noel Ureña. The tour will visit La Selva Biological Station, where you can expect to see Slaty-tailed Trogon, Rufous and Broad-billed Motmots, Keel-billed and Black-mandibled Toucans, and more. The oak cloud forest of the Talamanca Mountains is home to numerous birds, including the Resplendent Quetzal, and Barred and Sulfur-winged Parakeets. When we visit Carará National Park, we'll



Resplendent Quetzal Noel U.

find a large variety of wildlife, including 400 species of birds as well as monkeys, iguanas, agouties, sloths, and coaties. Expect to see over 300 bird species during this adventure! The tour is limited to eight persons, and will raise funds for FCAS. Cost is \$2,500 per person, double occupancy, and includes airport pickup, accommodations and food, and park entrance fees. Request a detailed itinerary and register for the tour with Quetzal Tours through Nick Komar at info@quetzal-tours.com or call 970-449-3645.

Photo: Resplendent Quetzal by Noel Urena.



Costa Rica Birding Odyssey: March 21-April 4

Join Bill Turner on a 15-day birding odyssey to Costa Rica's major habitats on both the Caribbean and Pacific slopes. We'll bird from lowland rainforests to cloud forests. Our lodge in the Caribbean lowlands offers reliable sightings of the endangered Great Green Macaw, the Great Curassow, Crested Guan, and Red-legged Honeycreeper, among

more than 400 other species.

At another seldom-visited locale, we look for species rarely encountered elsewhere such as the Yellow-eared Toucanet, Keel-billed and Tody Motmots, and White-fronted Nunbird. We visit a vast

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. Visit

www.fortcollinsaudubon.org for more information and updates. RSVP is recommended.

Feb. 12-15, Friday through Monday, Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). In addition to the February field trips listed below, FCAS encourages all of our members to participate in the GBBC. For more details, refer to the Conservation Corner article on Page 3 and watch for additional announcements on our Facebook page in early February.

Feb. 13, Saturday, River's Edge Natural Area (Loveland). Leader: Irene Fortune, irene_fortune@msn.com, 970-613-0966. This bird walk, co-sponsored by the City of Loveland's Open Lands Division, will be oriented primarily to beginning birders (but people of all skill levels are welcome to attend). River's Edge is one of the area's newest natural areas and a real gem in the heart of Loveland. Meet at 9 a.m. in the main entrance parking lot south of 1st Street.

Feb. 14, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com, work: 970-669-1185, home: 970-669-8095. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the City of Fort Collins. All levels are welcome. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot. Call for any change.

Future Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Surveys: See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey. Dates and times for future surveys are



Jabiru with young by Bill Eden.

private ranch where we may see nesting Jabirus, Spectacled Owls, Long-tailed Manakins, and huge flocks of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. The scenic Talamasca Mountains offer many endemics as well as being a stronghold of the iconic Resplendent Quetzal.

Our expert birder/naturalist guide, Willy Alfaro, is a former president of the Costa Rican Ornithological Society and a National Geographic-certified photo instructor. Maximum group size is 10; three openings remain. The tour price of \$4595 per person double occupancy plus airfare, and includes a donation to FCAS. For an itinerary and further information, contact Bill Turner at toursbyturner@aol.com or call (303) 795-5128.



Lazuli Bunting seen during Fort Collins CBC. Photo by Dave Leatherman.



Loveland 2015 CBC—Three Never-Recorded Species Sighted

By Nicholas Komar, Complier

The 16th annual Loveland CBC was attended by 62 observers, who collectively counted 20,385 birds of 100 species on January 1. Three species had never been recorded before during this event: American Woodcock, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Hermit Thrush. Five additional species were recorded during count week only, bringing the count week species count to 105, the highest ever. New high



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker by Nick Komar.

counts were established for several species, including: Green-winged Teal (29), Sharp-shinned Hawk (13), Cooper's Hawk (18), Glaucous Gull (2), Great Horned Owl (35), Northern Saw-whet

Owl (14), Golden-crowned Kinglet (10), Eastern Bluebird (6), and Song Sparrow (91). In spite of the high species count, overall numbers were actually about average, and waterfowl numbers were generally low, presumably because of the extended cold spell since November. Most lakes were 100% frozen. FCAS thanks the participants and the various organizations that support or sponsor the Loveland CBC: Larimer County Natural Resources Department, City of Loveland



American Woodcock by Nick Komar.

Open Space program, the Heart J Center for Experiential Learning, Sylvan Dale Ranch, and Quetzal Tours.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Barb Adams
James Anderson
Scott Bailly
Judith Balice
Mary Beck
Hetty Bixby
Monica Brewer
Debora Busse
Tom & Anne Butler
Barbara Case
Linda Chalcraft
Morris & Katy Clark
Jeane Darst
Susan Degutz
Larry DeMers
Beth Dillon
Ann Donoghue
Karen Dornseif

Georgia Doyle
Elizabeth A. Edwards
Irene Fortune
Robert Gobeille
Alan Godwin
Andrew Goris
Vince Griesemer
Larry Griffin
Michelle Haefele & Mike Knowles
Ron Harden
Jane Hawk
Jim Hayes
Pat Hayward
Carole Hossan
Lynne Hull
Anne Hunsinger
Joel Hurmence

Janice Johnson
Carol Jones
Julia Jordan
Sue Kenney
Nicholas Komar
Lark Latch
Dorothy Leising
Jean Locken
Thomas Lynch
Lois Mahoney
Ted Manahan
Connie Marvel
Jessie Meschievitz
William & Sue Miller
Kerry Miller & Peter Weckesser
Hildegard S. Morgan
Paul A. Opler
Barbara Patterson

Shannon Perry
Phil Phelan
Sue Quinlan
Ann Reichhardt
John Reichhardt
Helmut Retzer
Robert Righter
Rich Roberts
Harry Rose
Judith Sanborn
Carol Seemueller
John Shenot
Joan Skurt
Hank Thode
Edith Thompson
Al Trask
John Waddell
David Wade
Sandy Winkler



Thank you for your membership!



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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 (NSA), 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.