

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.

March 2014

Volume 45, Issue 3

Eric Odell

Species Conservation Program Manager, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Presents

Carnivore Conservation in Colorado:

A Look Back and a (potential) Look Forward

Thursday, March 13

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

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

Eric Odell will describe past and potential future conservation programs that the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife have embarked upon to restore native carnivore populations to Colorado. River otters, Canada lynx, and wolverine will be discussed. An insight to the biological, social, and political challenges in achieving success will be presented.

Eric Odell grew up in Colorado and gained a strong appreciation of the outdoors from an early age. He attended Middlebury College in Vermont, traveled extensively for a variety of field jobs, and then began graduate school at Colorado State University where he com-



Canada lynx and Eric Odell.

pleted his Masters degree in Wildlife Biology. He began working for Colorado Division of Wildlife in 2000 and has worked for that agency, now Colorado Parks and Wildlife, in a variety of capacities—as a Habitat Biologist based in an NRCS field office, as a Conservation Biologist, as the Grassland Coordinator, and now as the Species Conservation Program Manager for Carnivores. In his current role, Odell directs conservation and management programs to aid in the establishment and protection of native, non-game carnivore species.

Join us on March 13 at 7:30 p.m. for this presentation that is free and open to the public!

Remember to Renew Your Membership to FCAS!

President's Corner

by Joann Thomas

Moving west was a watershed event for me. Having been raised in the south and living a significant portion of my life in the east shaped my beliefs on conservation in a far different direction than the West would believe. Water, for example—when we were facing water shortage here in Colorado due to lack of snowpack, I was renovating my family's summer home on the gulf coast. While excavating and removing a butane tank from the back yard, the workers hit the water table at three feet. The concept of water shortage simply did not exist there.

Needless to say, my education on conservation grew exponentially after moving to Colorado—in many ways, not just about water usage. After becoming a master naturalist with the city, I learned about invasive plants. One in particular, the Russian Olive, rang a bell. While living in Virginia, I met Andre Viette, one of the foremost hybridizer of plants in the United States. His son represents the third generation in his family to travel the world collecting plants to hybridize for use in our gardens. Daylilies and

iris are Andre's proud heritage. At a meeting one day, he arrived in full bluster and ire! Having just come from a seminar on invasive plants, he defended mightily the maligned Russian Olive. At the time, I had no context with



Russian Olive.

which to understand the issues. Now, here in Colorado, I am deep in issues of Purple Loosestrife, Leafy Spurge, and Russian Olive.

I am proud that I have worked to reduce my footprint on Colorado's landscape. At the same time, I respect the contribution to the science of hybridization that the Viette family has made. I am left pondering the elements of connectivity in life: water issues, as are presently occurring in California; invasive plants which have been transported from one region to another; and loss of habitat that provides wildlife the necessities of life all are issues that require informed decisions for their management.

Therefore, I will make the trek down to Denver this weekend for the annual public policy meeting sponsored by Audubon.

We are still processing 2014 annual membership renewals! Please use the form on Page 8 of the *Ptarmigan* to renew by mail or at a program meeting, or renew online at www.fortnet.org/Audubon. Dues are \$20 for an electronic copy or \$30 for a printed copy via the mail. Remember, your membership and contributions are tax deductible. Keep the *Ptarmigan* coming by renewing today. We appreciate your support!

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Think Spring, Think Biodiversity

Spring in Colorado brings everything from heavy, wet snowstorms to warm, balmy days. It also brings excitement about readying yards and gardens for future blooms. But did you know that what you plant can change the biodiversity in your area?

A recent study published in the international journal, *Biological Conservation*, reported that biodiversity can be increased by adding

more flowerbeds to lawns, planting specific types of plants to attract both pollinators and butterflies, and by adding nest boxes for birds. The study, "Enhancing Urban Biodiversity and Its Influence on City-dwellers: An Experiment," showed that by making these changes in the 14 public gardens included in the study, the number of pollinator and bird species increased by 49 and 26 percent, respectively.

Along the Front Range of Colorado urbanization is reducing biodiversity. Conservation landscaping and gardening can help maintain desired biodiversity while attracting additional wildlife. When considering which plants to choose, it's important to think about the plants' functions and structures more than their appearance. Wildlife does not just magically appear, so consider what types of wildlife you'd like to attract. Wildlife is drawn because of favorable habitat which includes cover, food, and water. Planting native trees, shrubs, and flowers helps to provide these necessary elements.

Native plants have evolved in the regions in which they occur. They're adapted to the local climate and soil, and require less attention and less water, helping to conserve this resource. Likewise, wildlife species have evolved with the

plants. Using native plants will help to preserve the balance of the natural ecosystem.

Colorado is divided into five "life zones" based on the types of plants that occur in each of the areas. The Plains (3,500 to 5,500 feet), mostly eastern grasslands and riparian areas; Foothills (5,500 to 8,000 feet), characterized by Ponderosa Pines and a diversity of wildflowers; Montane (8,000 to 9,500 feet), Ponderosa and Lodgepole pines, Douglas Fir, and Aspen; Subalpine (9,500 to 11,500 feet), dense forests of Subalpine Fir and Engelmann Spruce; and Alpine (above 11,500 feet), a wind-swept, mostly treeless region referred to as tundra. The [Colorado Native Plant Society](http://www.coloradobirds.info/gardening.php) provides lists of plants for each of these



Rufous-sided Hummingbird feeding on a Fuschia plant
by Barbara Magnuson/Larry Kimball.

regions.

Want to attract more Hummingbirds? They love Sunset Hyssop and tubular plants such as snapdragons and honeysuckle. Bees like multi-flowered plants such as Yarrow, Columbine, and Indian Paintbrush. Rabbitbrush is excellent for pollinators and butterflies as are mint and thyme, which provide both pollen and a nectar source.

Visit local nurseries for their native plants' sections or

your local extension office for lists of natives that do well in your area and attract wildlife.

An excellent resource is <http://www.coloradobirds.info/gardening.php>, where you can get more information about Colorado plants for wildlife habitat and conservation landscaping. It's time to plant. This year, think biodiversity!



Painted Ladies
on Rabbitbrush.



Learn from the Pros!

It is not often that an opportunity arises to learn about birds in an intense and exciting way, but you have that opportunity to learn and grow. On Saturday, March 29, Dr. Charles Clarkson, professor of ornithology, ecology, and conservation will present a program on “The World of Birds.” This special event evolved from one of



Dr. Charles Clarkson

our board members, Hildy Morgan, meeting Dr. Clarkson on a cruise and having the opportunity to learn from him. Her enthusiasm for Dr. Clarkson’s program led her to ask if he would come to Fort Collins and present the same program in one day. He agreed and now we can learn about the connections between birds and our changing environment. Don’t miss this exciting event! It is only one of the many opportunities that we in Fort Collins have to increase our knowledge of birds and other wildlife, habitat, conservation, and climate change.

FCAS continues to offer education programs each month. And, wow, what a program we had in February. David Leatherman educated us on what birds eat. As I listened, I realized the many education connections that have been made since I moved here 15 years ago. After discovering Kevin Cook’s bird classes, I enrolled and developed relationships that endure to this day. Scott Cobble, FCAS’s secretary, was in that class. Subsequently, I completed the training and became a master naturalist with the city. You too have that opportunity as the city is beginning its next training for the program now. The expression that you learn by teaching is indeed true—at least for me. I learned as I researched a subject.

In addition to these local programs, there are the Road Scholar programs in Colorado which

feature birds, other wildlife, and natural history. For five years, I assisted in several programs and scoured Colorado in search of birds and mammals. It was the most enjoyable job I have ever had! After joining FCAS, I learned that there was another huge topic to be considered—conservation. At first, I was annoyed—after all, I just wanted to observe and identify birds, and have fun. I was soon to learn that the two were linked in lock step. As conservation goes, so go the birds.

A different kind of learning had to occur—one that I was not too willing to accept. My trip to Ecuador changed my thinking. Habitat destruction is not an abstract topic there; it is right before your eyes.

Deforestation abounds, and then you drive near by to nature preserves and lush vegetation filled with the sounds of life, not chain saws. In addition, Ecuadorians are fighting to protect Amazonia from oil and gas exploration. What a huge issue! I was moved by the dedication of the people I met and thought I could not do less. Now added to my education is habitat conservation. I confess, mostly for the birds, but as I consider the issue, the web of relatedness of all life grows real.

I invite you to stretch, reach out, learn and grow. Join FCAS if you are not a member, take local and online classes, and travel even if it’s just across country. After all, we are all in this together!



Long-tailed Sylph at Guango Lodge, Ecuador by Nick Komar.



Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free of charge (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Visit www.fortnet.org/Audubon for more information and updates. RSVP is recommended.

March 9, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com, work: 970-669-1185, home: 970-669-8095. Call for any change. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the City of Fort Collins. All levels are welcome.

March 21, Friday, All-A-Bird to Riverbend Ponds and Cottonwood Hollow. Leader: John Shenot, johnshenot@gmail.com, 970-682-2551. Celebrate the first full day of spring and the start of the weekend with another field trip to John's favorite city natural areas. Meet at 4 p.m. at the Riverbend Ponds parking lot on Prospect Road.

April 13, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Meet at 7 a.m. See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey.

May 11, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Meet at 7 a.m. See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey.

May 17, Saturday, Gateway Natural Area. Leader: Bob Righter, rorighter@earthlink.net, 303-908-1667. This trip will begin at 8 a.m. at the parking area just past the tollbooth. Note that Gateway is a fee area (\$5/vehicle); consider carpooling. Bring a lunch and expect to walk at least a mile.



American Wigeon by Alex Avery.



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Highlights of February FCAS Field Trips

by John Shenot

A hardy group of nine birders hiked in the cold and snow at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area on February 9 and tallied 27 species—not bad for a cold, foggy February day! The rewards included observations of a Golden Eagle, a Canyon Wren, two Cassin's Finches, and a flyover Common Redpoll identified by its call (good sleuthing!).



Merlin by Krit Adirek during the Prospect Ponds field trip.

The February 15 trip to Prospect Ponds also attracted nine birders who observed over 30 species at this City of Fort Collins Natural Area (sometimes called Sharp Point Drive complex by birders) and at the adjacent CSU Environmental Learning Center. Highlights of this trip included Northern Pintails, two Bald Eagles, a Wilson's Snipe, and a Merlin.

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



Spring Fling Seminar Day with Dr. Charles Clarkson—March 29

Have you ever wondered why most species of birds migrate while others do not, or how something as simple as a feather can unlock a world of information for avian researchers? Perhaps you desire more information about the connection between our changing environment and birds, and want to know how you can make a difference in alleviating the stresses faced by birds on a daily basis.

The answers to these questions and more will be presented when the FCAS presents its Spring Fling, "The World of Birds," on March 29, at the Drake Center on Drake

Road in Fort Collins from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Dr. Charles Clarkson, professor of ornithology, ecology, and conservation at Roger Williams University, will be the featured speaker. Dr. Clarkson will discuss how the biology of birds has baffled scientists for years, the science behind feathers and flight, survival: a year in the life of a bird, how birds cope with a changing planet, and what can I do?: the power of one. For information and registration, please contact Hildy Morgan at hildy.morgan@gmail.com or 970.223.3493.



Dr. Clarkson with baby Egret.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Barb Adams
Herman & Patricia Adams
Robert Babbs
Scott Baily
David R. Bayer
Charles Bell
Ehud Ben-Hur
Eric & Carol Bergersen
Hetty Bixby
Robert Blinderman
Robert Buderman
Kate Carr
Barbara Case
Scott Cobble
Susan Cottingham
Ruth DeMartini
Larry DeMers
Lauren DeRosa,
Wild Birds Unlimited
Georgia Doyle

Kim Dunlap
Elizabeth A. Edwards
Scott Farquhar
Robert Gobeille
Ruth Grant
Vince Griesemer
Larry Griffin
Nancy Hallerman
Ronald Harden
Kathleen Hardy
Joel Hurmence
Carol Jones
Barbara Jones
Jack & Nora Jones
Star Jorgensen
Kristin Joy
Mike Knowles & Michelle Haefele
Michael Lacy
Jane Low
Thomas Lynch

Connie Marvel
Jennifer Monath
Connie Murray
Dan & Linda O'Brien
Paul A. Opler
Claudia Louise Parker
Jerry Partin
Laurie Paulik
Christine & Joe Polazzi
Robert Righter
Anne Saunders
Doris K. Sumrall
Joann M. Thomas
Sandra J. Tinsman
James Tolstrup, High
Plains Environmental Center
Al Trask
Bruce & Barbara Vigneault
Kay Ward
Robin Welsh

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

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 printing and mailing the newsletter, so to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan*, please support your local chapter and subscribe. See the details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortnet.org/Audubon.



Andes of Ecuador Excursion, August 2-10, 2014

This August, join fellow Auduboners in experiencing the mystique of Ecuador's Andean peaks and cloud forests. Quetzal Tours is offering an eight-day, relaxed-pace birding adventure to Ecuador, led by the bilingual Ecuadorian birding guide, Xavier Muñoz.

Not only will this be a unique experience at a low price (just \$2200 per person), but the event also serves as a fundraiser for FCAS, as a portion of the proceeds will be donated to our local chapter.

Locations visited include Mindo, Nanegalito, Papallacta Pass, and Guacamayos Pass. Birding highlights will be dozens of species of brightly colored tanagers and hummingbirds, many of which can be seen at

close range for breathtaking photography. And, of course, quetzals.

Ecuador has the highest biodiversity in the world, hosting more bird species than any other country! The tour is limited to six customers in order to guarantee a quality, personalized experience. Add-on guided birding excursions to the Amazonian rainforests or the unique Galapagos Islands also can be arranged for those who can stay longer.

For more information or to reserve your spot, contact Nick Komar at info@quetzal-tours.com or 970-449-3645.



Ecuador Cloud Forest by Nick Komar.

Action in the Colorado Legislature

by Ron Harden

With the 2014 legislative session well under way, your Audubon Colorado Council's Public Policy Committee has been at work. Meeting with our NAS lobbyist for Colorado, Jen Boulton, several bills were selected to track. Of these, five were determined to have priority status. She will inform legislators of our Committee's position, testify at hearings, and, when possible, cooperate with lobbyists of other environmental organizations. The following bills are considered priority:

SB63, "Mandatory Review of Agency Rules," would require that all proposed state agency rules show that they are "not too costly for those who must comply." This burdensome mandate is opposed because it could adversely affect rules regarding public health, safety, and the environment.

HB1008, "Private Loans for Forest Health," would allow a state agency to make loans to private entities for "forest health projects." This bill should be amended to assure funding to public entities is not reduced, and define what type of forest health projects would qualify.

SB17, "Limit Use of Agricultural Water," is

supported. It would prohibit local governments from approving developments with more than 15 percent irrigated turf. If water rights were acquired for such developments, more agricultural lands would dry up that, in turn, would adversely affect wildlife.

HB1090, "Supermajority for Fees," would require a 60 percent vote of the legislature, rather than a simple majority, to pass any bill that would create or pass a fee. Fortunately, this bill was killed.

HB1033, "Regulatory Reform," would require that small businesses with less than 100 employees be issued warnings rather than other sanctions for "minor" violations of laws or regulations. This bill is opposed because minor is not defined and because the consequences of those violations would fall on the public and the environment.

There will be an "Audubon Day at the Capitol" on Monday, March 17. FCAS members are encouraged and invited to visit the Capitol for a tour with our lobbyist, and see a presentation by important legislators.



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. Check all applicable:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member | \$20 |
| Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New or Renewing FCAS Chapter Member | \$30 |
| Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member | \$750 |
| Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email
or receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Support for Alex Cringan | |
| Fund natural history education grants | \$_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New NAS Member | |
| Receive the NAS <i>Audubon</i> by mail | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewing NAS Member | |
| Receive the NAS <i>Audubon</i> by mail | \$35 |

Total Amount Enclosed: \$_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone # _____

Email: _____

May we send you FCAS email alerts if updates occur for field trips, programs etc.?

Yes or **No**

May we contact you if volunteer opportunities occur from helping at events to contacting legislators on important environmental issues?

Yes or **No**

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 31st extend through the following year. Applications can be completed at www.fortnet.org/Audubon