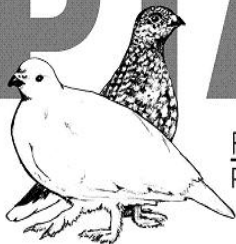


PTARMIGAN



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.

January 2015

Volume 46, Issue 1

Rick Harness

Wildlife Biologist, EDM International, Inc.

Presents:

“The Dominican Republic and Ridgway’s Hawk: A Species in Peril”

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

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

The Ridgway Hawk, endemic to the island of Hispaniola, is an endangered raptor with only 182 to 218 adults left in the world. To supplement the critically low population, The Peregrine Fund initiated a population enhancement program. From 2009 through 2012, The Peregrine Fund released 19 birds in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Unfortunately Ridgway Hawks readily perch on anthropogenic structures, including power poles, and at least three of 11 birds released in 2011 and 2012 were electrocuted. The electrocutions resulted in suspension of the population enhancement program and initiation of a power line retrofitting program. In 2013, approximately 50 poles in high quality habitat near the Punta Cana raptor release site were fitted with elevated perches, and in 2014 the population enhancement program was re-initiated and an additional 29 hawks were released. Unfortunately,



Ridgway Hawk by Rick Harness

six birds were electrocuted; four on poles previously fitted with elevated perches. In response EDM International, Inc., a Fort Collins company specializing in raptor protection strategies, was asked to review the program and make recommendations. As a result, Power Line Sentry, Fort Collins, provided samples of retrofitting products to the local Dominican Republic power company to correctly retrofit poles in 2015.

Rick Harness is a certified wildlife biologist working for the private consulting firm EDM International. His focus is on wildlife-utility interactions, including power line electrocutions and bird collisions. He works on avian power line issues both nationally and internationally.

Join us on Jan. 15 to learn more about Ridgway Hawks and efforts to conserve and protect this species in peril. This program is free and open to the public.

President's Corner

by Joann Thomas

It's hard to leave following such a great FCAS event as the December Potluck! Great food, great company, and great photos! Looking forward, we have a full spring in 2015. This month at our program meeting, we will vote in the new slate of officers: John Shenot, President; Elizabeth Pruessner, Vice President; Scott Cobble, Secretary; and John Waddell, Treasurer.

Nomination from the floor are encouraged and gladly accepted. John Shenot and Liz are doing double duty as they are still seriously engaged in their careers and retain their positions as field trip coordinator and membership chair. To make this work, the board will provide whatever help they need. We will all be very busy this year!

I look forward to seeing everyone at our program meetings and as volunteers wherever you can help. Many thanks for the past two years!

**And thanks Joann,
for your time served as President!**

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FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending a complimentary issue of our newsletter. Join us at our monthly programs at the Fort Collins Senior Center on the second Thursday of the month. To receive the *Ptarmigan*, please subscribe to the newsletter. See the details on the last page of this newsletter or on our website at www.fortnet.org/Audubon.

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

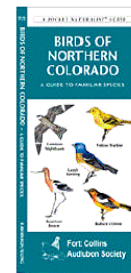
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



FCAS Annual Membership Renewal

The 2015 annual membership renewal drive begins in January. You can take care of it right now by renewing online or via US mail. Please use the form on the back page of the *Ptarmigan* newsletter to renew by mail or at a program meeting. You also can renew online at our website: www.fortnet.org/Audubon.

Dues are \$20 to receive the *Ptarmigan* electronically or \$30 for a printed copy. Your membership and contributions are tax deductible.

Thank you for supporting our mission of conservation, education, stewardship, and habitat restoration, focusing on birds and other wildlife.

Welcome New and Renewing Members

Julie Barraza
Linda Chalcraft
Scott Cobble
Leigh Dawson
James DeMartini
Karen Dornseif
Kim Dunlap
Irene Fortune

Robert Gobeille
Jennifer Griffin
William Henderson
Dennise Matheson
Jerry Partin
John Reichhardt
John Waddell
Robin Welsh

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



Conservation—the Year Ahead

As we ring in the New Year, Colorado is facing some tough issues—rapidly expanding oil and gas drilling and a projected shortfall of water.

Over the past decade, Colorado has experienced a boom in oil and gas drilling, with more than 53,000 active wells scattered across the state. Weld County has more wells than any other county in the United States, with some 18,000 active wells. Due to the increased use of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing (fracking),



Fracking rig from wallstreetdaily.com

Colorado now supplies nearly one in every 50 barrels of U.S. output according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

One of the most active drilling regions is in the northeastern part of the state where the Niobrara Shale formation occurs. The Oil and Gas Commission “...estimates that approximately two billion barrels of oil are recoverable from the Niobrara.” Clean Water Action, an organization of people and groups working together to protect the environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life, estimates anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 new wells could be added in the Niobrara region in the near future.

Oil and gas drilling is also expanding into more populated areas along the Front Range, with residential areas experiencing an influx of well pads in and around their communities. There is an immediate and continuing need for implementing and enforcing strong rules to protect public safety, health, and the environment.

“Just like any other heavy industrial activity, the oil and gas industry needs to be held accountable for violations with appropriate penalties that prevent serious problems,” said Pete Maysmith, Executive Director, Conservation Colorado. Maysmith believes “it is critical that Coloradans have certainty that their communities, health, clean air, and water are protected.”

While protecting Colorado’s water is critical, another pressing issue is that of providing water for agricultural and residential use. A recent article in *The Denver Post* stated that “state water planners project a shortfall by 2050 of 163 billion gallons...double the amount used by the 1.3 million residents served by Denver Water.” Additionally, some areas of the state will experience water shortages by 2025. With 80 percent of Colorado’s water resources on the Western Slope, where less than 20 percent of the population resides, the challenge will be to come up with a state plan that addresses this imbalance while preserving what we know and love about our state.

Such a plan will need to be ongoing and include increased conservation. James Eklund, director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, wrote in a recent “Opinion” in *The Denver Post*, “No single issue will have more direct impact on Colorado’s

future than our ability to successfully and collaboratively manage our life-giving water.”



From Geri Lavrov/Photographer's Choice RF/Getty Images.

It will take strong leadership in combination with increased conservation to ensure the safety and well-being of the citizens, communities, wildlife, and environment of Colorado. Future environmental challenges will require creative ways to encourage good stewardship by both individuals and businesses.



Backyard Birds

Have you ever really looked at the birds in your backyard? On Feb. 13-16, you have a chance to not just be observant, but also to become a citizen scientist. Many fields of science are now making use of advocates' observations. I first heard the term from my son who uses rocketry to study the atmosphere as a citizen scientist, and then report his results.

On Feb. 13-16, National Audubon Society and Cornell University Lab of Ornithology are partnering in sponsoring the Great Back Yard Bird Count (GBBC). Anyone can participate and report what is seen in increments of as little as 15 minutes.

What do we see in our backyards? We are often accustomed to seeing the familiar birds: robins,



Black-capped Chickadee.
FCAS file photo

blue jays, starlings, grackles, but if we are observant, we can see much more. Just two days ago when our temperatures were a little warmer, I saw two birds fluttering around my blue spruce and I heard the familiar cry of the Black-capped Chickadee. Last summer, Scott Cobble, our secretary, identified three Blue-gray Gnatcatchers—I'd

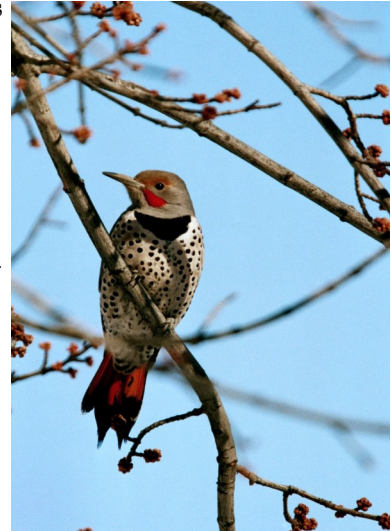
never seen them in my backyard. The most fun was spotting a young Osprey high in my neighbor's cottonwood tree. Since beginning my backyard bird list, we have seen hawks, sparrows, warblers, woodpeckers, and jays—and I will never forget the Western Tanager I saw when I first moved into the house 15 years ago. All of this right in the middle of Fort Collins!

Our sightings are important. Each time our observations are tabulated across the nation, we get an idea of just how healthy our bird popula-

tions are. What are the effects of loss of habitat, changing migration patterns, climate change, and disease? This nation-wide count coupled with regional bird counts like our Christmas bird counts give us a snapshot of our avian population's well-being.

In our February newsletter, we will have a list of events we are participating in on the GBBC weekend. You, however, are the citizen scientist in your own back-

yard. We invite you to view all of the information about this national event at: www.bird.audubon.org/great-backyard-bird-count. There you will find all information about reporting your results, and watch for our scheduled events in February's newsletter.



Red-shafted Northern Flicker.
FCAS file photo.

Bath Nursery Avian Appreciation Day Saturday, Jan. 31; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Join FCAS at Bath Nursery on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2015, for Bath's annual Avian Appreciation Day. There will be exhibits, raptors, bird shows, and information about the Great Backyard Bird Count!

FCAS will help kids make backyard bird feeders out of milk cartons. These were a great success at the September Nature Fest at Fort



Mark Your Calendar for the Great Backyard Bird Count, February 13-16

FCAS is hoping to see record participation levels by bird enthusiasts in this year's Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). The GBBC runs from Friday, February 13 through Monday, February 16. Participants are asked to watch for birds at any location for at least 15 consecutive minutes, then submit a checklist of their observations on a website. You can record ordinary birds in your own backyard or look for rarities at one of our great local birding hotspots. Last year, participants submitted 138,000 checklists from 111 countries!

More information about the GBBC can be found at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/about/>. FCAS will provide a brief tutorial on how to participate at our February 12 chapter meeting, the day before the count begins. We will also identify volunteers that can help people enter the data on the GBBC website. If you are interested in participating in the 2015 GBBC, mark your calendar now and go to the website to learn more.

FCAS also is planning some special outings in

conjunction with this year's GBBC. We will schedule group GBBC counts at two or three local spots (to be announced at a later date) that don't typically attract much

attention from birders. These will be similar to field trips, but allow for interested people to participate in short blocks of time (15 minutes or more) and socialize with other birders. Details on these group counts will be provided on the FCAS website, FCAS Facebook page, and in the February issue of the *Ptarmigan*. Stay tuned!



Guatemala Cloud Forest Excursion: March 14-22, 2015

Experience the pristine cloud forest at Chelemha and Mayan ruins at Quirigua in the Atlantic



Resplendent Quetzal
by Knut Eisermann.

lowlands of Guatemala. Quetzal Tours is offering an eight-day, relaxed-pace birding and nature photography adventure, led by Guatemala's premier bilingual birding guide, Knut Eisermann, co-author of the *Aves de Guatemala*, an Annotated Checklist.

The event is a fundraiser for FCAS. The tour is limited to four people. For more information, contact Nick Komar at info@quetzal-tours.com, or 970-449-3645.

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.

Jan. 11, 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.

Jan. 24, Saturday, Lee Martinez Park. Leader: John Shenot, johnshenot@gmail.com, 970-682-2551. Not an early riser? Wonder why we never schedule field trips in the afternoon? It's because you usually see fewer birds in the afternoon. But, so what—this trip is for those who like to sleep in! Meet at 1 p.m. in the parking lot at the east end of Elm Street, by the ball field and tennis courts. We'll see what we can see—then celebrate or commiserate at Scrumpy's hard cider bar in Old Town.

Feb. 8, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Meet at 7:30 a.m. See above for this recurring, monthly survey.



Fort Collins Audubon Society
PO Box 271968
Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968



Printed on recycled paper

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 |

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**

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