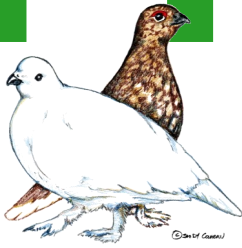


PTARMIGAN



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 2017

Volume 48, Issue 2

FCAS Presents

Dr. Kurt D. Fausch, Professor, CSU

Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology

Author of: "For the Love of Rivers: A Scientist's Journey"

Thursday, Feb. 9

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

Social Time: 7 p.m.; Program 7:20 p.m.

"Rather than simply explaining the science of streams and fish and the ecological relationships that bind them together, my goal is to draw you into the world of streams and their riparian forests and the animals supported by these linked habitats.... We need their sounds and their views, and their sound advice. And, in the end, I believe we will need to understand how and why we love rivers, if we hope to conserve them."—Dr. Kurt Fausch, "For the Love of Rivers: A Scientist's Journey"

Join us at on Feb. 9 at the Fort Collins Senior Center for this free program. The public is welcome.



Photo by David Herasimtschuk,
Freshwaters Illustrated.

Welcome

New National Members

FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending complimentary copies of our newsletter for one month. 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 if you'd like to keep receiving the *Ptarmigan* after the complimentary issue, please support your local chapter and subscribe to the newsletter. See the details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.

FCAS Annual Membership Renewal Reminder

The 2017 annual membership renewal drive is still in full swing! FCAS chapter memberships run for the calendar year from January through December. The form on the back page of the *Ptarmigan* newsletter may be used to renew by mail or you can renew at a program meeting, as well as renewing online at our website: www.fortcollinsaudubon.org. Dues are \$20 to receive the *Ptarmigan* electronically or \$30 for a printed copy.

President's Corner

by John Shenot

At the FCAS annual meeting in January (coinciding with our monthly program), the membership re-elected all the incumbent officers and directors, while also electing one new director to a vacancy. I will serve another two-year term as President, while the other officers serve one-year terms: Liz Pruessner as Vice President, John Waddell as Treasurer, and Scott Cobble as Secretary. Alan Godwin, Ron Harden, Bill Miller, Hildy Morgan, and Harry Rose will serve one-year terms filling out the rest of our Board of Directors.

The Board and I have also decided to re-appoint current chairpersons to lead some of our standing committees: Liz Pruessner for Membership, Hildy Morgan for Hospitality, Jessie Meschievitz for Programs, John Waddell for Finance, and myself for Field Trips. We have not appointed chairpersons for our other standing committees as of my publication deadline, but will announce those next month.

A Future Silent Auction

It was announced at the December potluck that there might be a silent auction event at the March program meeting. Following considerable discussion by the FCAS board members it became obvious that the announcement was premature in that there is an insufficient time remaining to properly organize that event. As it now stands the silent auction will most likely take place next fall. Stay tuned for further information.

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For other FCAS contacts visit

www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

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

Getting Green Laws

By Bill Miller

It's that time of year again for the annual Legislative Workshop put on by Audubon Society of Greater Denver and the Sierra Club. This year's meeting is Saturday, Feb. 25 from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at First Plymouth Church, 3501 S. Colorado Blvd., Englewood (southwest corner of Colorado and Hampden). The meeting has been retitled as "Getting Green Laws."



The tentative agenda includes a continental breakfast and registration at 8 a.m., welcome and introductions, a review of top priority environmental bills, a panel discussion related to priority bills, a break for lunch, short addresses by legislators present, and adjournment at 1:30 p.m.

Legislators are invited for lunch and further discussions, which gives us a chance to meet and engage them. We've had anywhere from one to five accept our past invitations. It's always an interesting morning!

The cost of the forum is \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. There are three ways to register: (1) online at <https://sierraclub.org/rocky-mountain-chapter/blog/2016/11/getting-green-laws-legislative-forum>; (2) call 303-973-9530, Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; or (3) send your check to: Audubon of Greater Denver, 9308 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Littleton, CO 80128.



FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

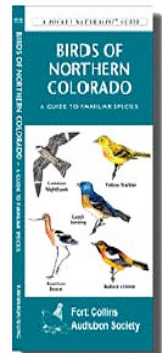
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



“The price of apathy towards public affairs is to be ruled by evil men.” —Plato

The 80 folks who attended the January program meeting were treated to the phenomenal photography of conservation photographer, Dave Showalter, who has been working for a decade on photographing the American West in an effort to inform the public about the ever increasing changes to that landscape. Dave's photography included numerous feel-good images of western scenery and iconic native wildlife. Also included were disturbing images of habitat destruction and fragmentation thrust upon the landscape by the efforts of energy companies to feed the ever-increasing demand of our citizens.



Perhaps the most important words I heard that evening were the ones directed to the audience, to the effect that if we want to save or conserve our lands, we must increase our efforts to let our elected leaders know how we feel. If we don't step up in numbers greater than in the past, our voices will continue to be drowned out by the moneyed interests that currently enjoy the latitude extended to them by the 2010 U.S. Supreme Court decision, referred to as Citizen's United.

It is hoped that we can bring you timely information on issues of national import. The need for citizens to speak out loudly and clearly is imperative.

Ronald A. Ryder Memorial Fund Update

by Bill Miller



Dr. Ronald Ryder.

The following is from an email sent to our treasurer from Dr. Clait Braun (Ryder graduate student, Class of 1969) who initially kicked off the idea to have a memorial scholarship created at CSU in memory of Dr. Ronald A. Ryder:

“Your efforts have resulted in gifts exceeding the amount necessary to endow in perpetuity an annual scholarship in the name of Dr. Ronald A. Ryder in the Department of Wildlife, Fishery, and Conservation Biology at Colorado State University. Please accept the thanks of the Ryder Family, the Depart-

ment, and myself for your important contributions. I expect the total will continue to grow as several pledges were delayed and others will contribute as they learn of the passing of Dr. Ryder. Contributions can continue to be made, but this was conceived as a one-time effort to build the amount that would be necessary for endowed status. We have exceeded that goal! Thank you!

This was an important effort and it provided an opportunity for me to reconnect or newly connect with you. I personally appreciate your willingness to consider helping with this effort in memory of Dr. Ryder as well as to share communications with me. The other information that I intended to share with you was the published 'In Memoriam' that will be in the next issue of the *Auk*. It is not yet published, but a pdf of it will be sent once it becomes available.”

Mark Your Calendar for the Great Backyard Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual birding and citizen science event for people of all skills. This year it runs from Friday, February 17 through Monday, February 20. 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. More information about the GBBC can be found at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/about/>. Last year more than 100 people submitted GBBC checklists from Larimer County, recording 101 different species. We're hoping to see even bigger participation and results this year!



Not Just Fair Weather Friends

Years back, braving an unusually cold day in south Florida, I spied a group of Anis. A bird more of the tropics than temperate climes, they were fluffed and snuggled together for warmth and lined up along a short drooping branch just a few feet above a pond. As the group wriggled together, the bird at the end of the twig found itself about to be pushed off. Avoiding the inevitable, it stood up, hopped across the backs of its mates, and took its new position at the inside head of the line. Over the next hour this repeated itself, the outside bird creeping across the others to the inside spot; a revolving conveyor belt of Anis working together to do what was necessary to stay alive in the cold. Freezing temperatures are uncommon in south Florida, but not so here. On December 17, the day of the Fort Collins Christmas Bird Count, the high was 4°F, yet 89 bird species were counted. How is it these fragile creatures manage to survive such dangerously cold conditions?

Like those Anis, birds partake in varied behaviors to minimize the effects of cold and wind. They roost in a warm spot like the lee side of a tree, in old nests, bird boxes, under eaves, in tree cavities and even under the snow. When temperatures plummet, some birds that generally roost alone may roost in groups. As many as one hundred Pygmy Nuthatches have been counted

entering one tree cavity.

Before roosting, wintering birds must eat, eat, eat. The ability to find ample, quality food is a primary factor in determining a species' winter range. Wintering birds often are seen feeding in flocks as group feeding behavior creates added safety by providing more eyes to scan for predators. Some birds, like White-breasted Nuthatches, cache food for even leaner times.



White-breasted Nuthatch from
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu>.

Finally, physiologically, birds have some impressive tricks for surviving cold. We all have seen birds puffed-up, one foot tucked, and know of the astounding insulative power of down. (Interestingly, wood peckers have no down. They also are uniquely capable of creating a snug tree cavity in which to roost). But some adaptations aren't so obvious, like the "rete mirabile" or "wonderful net" found in birds with webbed feet. This is a tight network of arteries and veins that fosters heat exchange, keeps the foot temperature closer to ambient temperature, and helps prevent heat loss through their larger foot surface. Tiny chickadees can go into a controlled hypothermia to save energy, and also controlled shivering to create heat.

Clever behavior, an impressive ability to find food, and amazing physiology are only a few of the ways birds are able to survive deadly winter conditions; presenting yet another facet of the complex lives of birds.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

James & Darla Anderson
Mary Beck
Hetty Bixby
Monica Brewer
Morris Clark
Chandriee Davis
Stephen Dornseif
Seth Gallagher
William Gerk
Ray & Joan Glabach
Alan Godwin
Jennifer Griffin
Jane Hawk
Carole Hossan

Joel Hurmence
Barbara Jones
Julia Jordan
Dave Landers
Lark Latch
Rosemary & Bob Lucas
Serena Mangus
Hildegard S. Morgan
Fred & Karen Mosher
Shannon Perry
Susan Peterson
Phil Phelan
Tim Priehs
Elizabeth Pruessner

Patricia Quier
Helmut Retzer
Gary Robinson
Harry Rose
Herb Saperstone
John Shenot
Paula Stearns
Austen Stone
Douglas Swartz
Edith Thompson
David Wade
Robin Welsh
Roger Wieck
Lori Zabel
William O. Zelt

Thank you for your membership!



FCAS promoted, and many of our members participated in, three of this season's CBCs: Fort Collins, Rawhide Power Station, and Loveland. With temperatures hovering in the 0 to 5 degree range all day, the December 17 Fort Collins CBC resulted in fewer species observed (89) than in recent years. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen and photographed in Bellvue, marking one of just a few records of this species on any Colorado CBC, ever. Other highlights included a Pacific Wren, a Gray Catbird, and a Barn Owl.

The December 23 CBC at Rawhide Power Station turned up 74 species, one shy of the record for this cir-



Sharp-shinned Hawk seen on Fort Collins CBC
by Larry Lechner.

cle. Highlights included a Long-tailed Duck, a Northern Goshawk, and two species not previously seen on a Rawhide CBC: a Lincoln's Sparrow and five Tundra Swans. And finally, the Loveland CBC once again surpassed 100 species, with many surprises. Some of the least expected finds were Swamp Sparrow, Common Loon, Barrow's Goldeneye, Long-eared Owl, and Iceland Gull. Once again, these three CBCs demonstrated that our area has a rich diversity of bird life, even in winter!

Birding in Brazil's Southern Amazon—July 23-31

Join Quetzal Tours on a week-long birding excursion in Brazil's Southern Amazon, July 23–31. The adventure begins in the town of Alta Floresta in the north of the state of Mato Grosso, with guide Bradley Davis. The trip includes birding in Fazenda Anacã, a unique ecotourism project, and along the Rio Azul, an exciting new destination in the southern Brazilian Amazon.

During the week in the Southern Amazon, participants should encounter around 300 species of birds. The areas visited hold a number of endemic, rare, and local species, among which include Kawall's Parrot, Crimson-bellied Parakeet, Razor-billed Curassow,



Capped Heron by Bradley Davis.

Crimson Topaz, Tapajos Hermit, Black-girdled Barbet, Bronzy and Blue-cheeked Jacamars, Gould's Toucanet, Curl-crested Araçari, Glossy Antshrike, Point-tailed Palmcreeper, and much more.

The price of \$2,800 per person, double occupancy, includes eight nights lodging with meals, ground transportation, entrance fees, and expert bilingual birding guide. Quetzal Tours also donates a portion of the proceeds to FCAS. For more information or to reserve a spot, contact Contact Nick Komar: quetzal65@comcast.net; 970-449-3645.

Upcoming Field Trips

Feb. 12, 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 on the second Sunday of each month. All levels are welcome. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot. Call for any change.

Feb. 25, Saturday, Jackson Reservoir. Leader: Austin Hess, outdoorlover1214@yahoo.com. Jackson

Reservoir, located 75 minutes east of Fort Collins, is an oasis on the plains and probably one of the top 10 birding hotspots in all of Colorado. Regardless of whether the late February weather is wintry or spring-like, this is a place where unusual birds are frequently observed. Meet at 6:50 a.m. at the north end of the Harmony Transportation Center parking lot to arrange carpooling. Volunteer drivers will be needed; those who don't drive may wish to contribute something to those who do.



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.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|----------|--|
| <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.