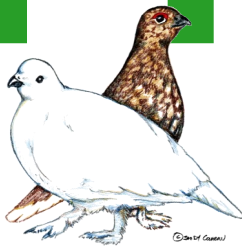


PTARMIGAN



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.

May 2020

Volume 51, Issue 5

FCAS Presents:

Bryan Guarente, Meteorologist/Instructional Designer, The COMET Program-Boulder
"Where the Weather Takes Us"

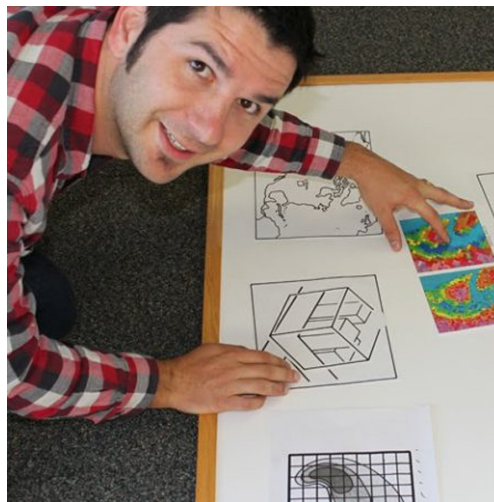
Thursday, May 14—Announcements: 7:00 p.m.; Program 7:20 p.m.

*****This will be an online meeting using Zoom*****

Enter the following link on your web browser at or before 7 p.m. and follow the instructions to join the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/207880802>

Also see the President's Corner article on Page 2 for more information

Each spring and fall a cascade of hormones triggered by changing day length lures migrant birds like a Siren's song toward the poles or equator. This period, called *zugunruhe* (migratory restlessness), is the basis of bird migrations. Is it a misfortune that this migratory drive coincides with some of the most violent weather systems, or is it perhaps instead a gift when seen through the eyes of an efficiency-seeking, meteorologist-bird? In fact, the frenzied flow of high and low-pressure weather systems, typical of spring and fall, and found in the mid-latitudes (30° to 60°) gives rise to the winds that fuel migration. Understanding weather and how big-picture



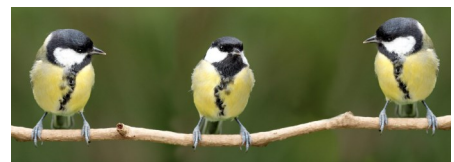
Bryan Guarente.

weather systems affect bird movements can be useful tools for birders seeking rarities, fall-outs, and other exciting migratory phenomena.

Bryan Guarente started birding at the age of 7 in Pennsylvania with his dad before rabidly making bird lists at the University of Northern Colorado (B.S. in Meteorology) when Lower Latham Reservoir and Crow Valley Campground were easy to access. Weather and bird migration came together while listening to night flights at the University of Illinois while getting his Master's degree in Atmospheric Science. He now makes online learning for a broad spectrum of individuals covering topics in the Earth Sciences at The Cooperative Program for Meteorologist Education and Training (COMET) in Boulder.

**ENJOY
YOUR
SUMMER!**

Just a reminder that the *Ptarmigan* is not published during the summer months. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer. See you in September!



Because of our publication schedule, all the articles in the *Ptarmigan* are written weeks before you read them. As I write this, Colorado is facing a mandatory stay-at-home order until *at least* April 26. Even if the order is not extended, I expect public health officials will continue to recommend social distancing well into May, and probably beyond. In the face of this uncertainty and the underlying public health emergency, the FCAS Board decided to take the unusual step of converting our normal May chapter meeting into an online meeting using a tool called Zoom. Our guest speaker, Bryan Guarente, agreed to offer his presentation online instead of in person.

If you've never used Zoom before, I hope you won't be intimidated. It's free, and basically all you have to do is enter the website address on Page 1 of this newsletter into your web browser at or slightly before the appointed time. From there, you'll have the option of either downloading a Zoom application to your computer (if you haven't already done so), or simply joining the meeting from your web browser. You'll be able to see your host (me) and watch Bryan's presentation on your screen and use your computer audio or a phone to listen. I will offer further instructions to attendees at the start of the meeting.

Please understand that the only realistic alternative to scheduling an online meeting was to cancel the

meeting altogether. The Board fully understands that some of our members don't have the right technology to attend an online meeting or may be intimidated by the format. We also realize an online meeting is not as social a gathering as our society would like. And since we've never done an online meeting before, it is quite possible that things will not go smoothly. Nevertheless, the Board decided that it is better to use an online format than to cancel the May program. It may not work for everyone, and we're sorry about that, but it will hopefully work for most.



FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members

by sending one complimentary copy of our newsletter. 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 it, please support your local chapter and subscribe. See details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.



FCAS CONTACTS

President

John Shenot

802-595-1669

johnshenot@gmail.com

Vice President

Liz Pruessner

970-484-4371

fortcollinsaudubonmembership@gmail.com

Program Chair

Jessie Meschievitz

jlmesch852@gmail.com

970-686-1424

Field Trip Coordinator

Sirena Brownlee

sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com

970-669-8095

Membership Chair

Harry Rose

970-430-6731

hlrose@toadaway.net

Newsletter Editor

Carol Jones

970-481-5213

cjones@cowisp.net

For other FCAS contacts visit

www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

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FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

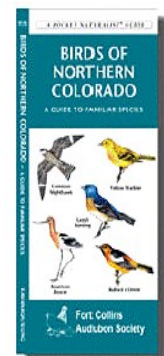
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

Wild Birds Unlimited
3636 S. College Ave
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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



Conservation Corner ————— by Bill Miller

"Treat the earth well—it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." —*Ancient Native American proverb (often attributed to others).*

"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it." —*Robert Swan, environmentalist and explorer.*

2020—What a Year! And it Ain't Over Yet

Usually I select a topic of significant environmental concern, such as global climate change or egregious performance by some federal agency (EPA?) or the President himself. This month my article will be different. I recently ran across an article titled, "Our Wild Calling: How Connecting With Animals Can Transform Our Lives—And Save Theirs." The article was a review of a new book by Richard Louv. The article, by Kurt Repanshek, found at <https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2020/04/our-wild-calling-how-connecting-animals-can-transform-our-lives-and-save-theirs>, pointed out that roughly 80 percent of Americans live in urban areas, but that moose, grizzly bears, or herds of bison or elk do not. Human development of the nation's landscape has forced wildlife into smaller, more remote parts of the country that are often fragmented by our roads, power lines, and fences. And, as more recently observed in the past two or three decades, further fragmented by our outdoor recreation. Hiking trails have been documented to have driven elk populations away from the vicinity of Vail, Colorado. Furthermore, it's



been shown that dogs—on leash—cause both critters and birds to instinctively avoid certain areas as domestic dogs are viewed by wildlife as predators.

In his article, Repanshek refers to Louv's 2005 best-seller, *Last Child in the Woods*, who painted the disturbing picture of how we're not just losing bits and pieces of our natural landscape, but also failing our children by not introducing them to nature.

This got me to thinking about how I ultimately became interested in, not just birds, but wildlife in general and the environmental issues that affect both wildlife and humans. I grew up in northeast New Jersey that was part of the greater New York City metropolitan area and already greatly urbanized. Our town had one municipal park, used primarily for ball games. There was some wooded, undeveloped land down by the railroad tracks where kids would go sledding in the winter and come home in the summer muddy and late for supper. Otherwise we didn't have much in the way of places to play in nature. During spring break of my

senior year of high school, I went camping on a long, but narrow, man-made lake in northwest New Jersey with two classmates. Early one morning, while walking around in a wooded area, I heard rustling in the leaves ahead of me, but still out of sight. I was somewhat apprehensive because this part of New Jersey still had black bears. After several minutes of looking for the source of the sound, I noticed the leaves on the ground sporadically jumping. Looking close, I saw about 50 or more birds looking for breakfast under the leaves that the birds kicked up to their rear. Although I couldn't identify the species, I watched for about 10 minutes.

After high school I came west to attend college. I served four and a half years in the U.S. Army; while still in the service, I developed an interest in wildlife, then later settled in Fort Collins. I was interviewed by Dr. Ron Ryder and accepted into the CSU Department of Wildlife Biology. A recession at that time kept me from finding part-time employment to supplement my G.I. Bill education benefits, so I started to work full time to support my wife and two young sons. Sometime around 1987 I subscribed to the National Audubon magazine because my third son was selling magazine subscriptions as a class fundraiser. The next thing I knew, I was receiving copies of the *Ptarmigan* and I attended a program meeting that it advertised. My mistake was attending three meetings in a row, after which the chapter vice-president convinced me to be a candidate for one of the Director-at-Large positions.

I never got back to college for that Wildlife Biology degree, but I've racked up a few years as a volunteer for FCAS and several other environmental organizations. To this day I wonder what path I might have followed after high school if I had some adult guidance and encouragement with regard to nature.



From <https://natureconservationlewisam.co.uk>.



Birding by Bike



Not long ago, for reasons too tedious to detail in full, I resolved to do my birding by bike. We birders have a keen interest in learning about the places we live and ways to observe and move mindfully through them. Wasn't it Hemingway who suggested the best way to get to know a place, its contours, was by riding a bicycle? Who was I to disagree? I'd done my time in convoys chasing the Gyr Falcon. I have been traffic.

On a bicycle, that hill you barely register on your morning car commute becomes a daily struggle you can meet, eventually with grace. There's the spot along the curb where the crabapple blossoms fall and the ear-full of waxwings gathers. A little further, the meadowlark's song. You're both passenger and engine on a bicycle, which for most of us means the pace with which we travel is just right to see and hear both the landscape and ourselves, at least after we've caught our breath.

While I'm wary of the tendency for naming to become taming, I love knowing the Killdeer return to my neighborhood, and the phoebe alights on the post, within the same week or two every year. Even if the birds have their own reasons, one's town becomes familiar, a home. There's joy in recognition, and even though you

know the blackbirds are coming to the pond you can pedal to, you're pleasantly surprised every time they do. Nature doesn't owe us anything, but it always pays us back if we go outside or even just peek out the window. By sharpening our focus, it returns us to the things of this world and therefore to ourselves.

So does the heartbeat. I used to roam far and wide in search of adventure. I'd drive miles to chase a rumor, if not a Pink-footed Goose. Along the way I'd somehow become a man who'd burn through a tank of gas



Belted Kingfisher
by Nick Komar.

while keeping a fastidious little trashcan clipped to his hip to clean up after those who didn't suitably appreciate nature. In addition to being a pendant, I'm a slow learner. Still, the irony wasn't lost on me.

Here are just a few of the birds I've watched on a loop of my bike patch: American Kestrels, American White

Pelicans, Bald and Golden Eagles, Belted Kingfishers, Black-billed Magpies, Black-capped Chickadees, Brewer's Blackbirds, a Bullock's Oriole—I could go on, but who's counting? While a bicycle moves more civilly than a car, it's faster than walking, so there also have been plenty of birds I've failed to name along the tarmac and gravel, but that's okay too. I could climb off and further explore a hotspot by foot. I could snap a picture. Most of the time I don't. While you're not in a rush on a bicycle, you also don't like to stop. Birding by bike teaches you to let go of your need to name and number.

Education Update

The Poudre River Fest originally scheduled for Saturday, May 30, has been rescheduled for Saturday, August 29 from 12–6 p.m. at New Belgium Brewery. We will be looking for volunteers for the Poudre River Fest and other rescheduled outreach and education events in the community. Please stay tuned for updates on summer and fall events on the FCAS webpage (www.fortcollinsaudubon.org), Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety/>) and email. Stay safe and see you soon.



Black-capped Chickadee
by Gail DuBois.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Judith Ann Balice

Rick Barry

Richard Bourdon

Barbara Denny

Randy & Kathy Fischer

Neil Holstein

Sue Kenney

Nick Komar

Kimberly E. Manajek

Jesse Meschievitz

Nancy J. Odom

Evi Buckner-Opler

Paul Opler

Barbara Patterson

Jim & Judy Rains

Theodore Ranieri

Your support makes our programs and conservation efforts possible and helps us achieve our mission of connecting people to the natural world.



“¿Listo?” (Ready?)

“Si.” (Yes.)

“Vamonos.” (Let’s go.)

Luis fired up his motorcycle, I hopped on the back. We headed out in the pitch black at 5:30 am. It was five miles up a rough dirt road to Las Tangaras (“The Tanagers”) Reserve, which Luis manages. We moved slowly



Moustached Puffbird.

and kept our eyes out for birds on and along the road, flushing a couple of nightjars and a Sicklet-winged Guan along the way. By the time we reached the high point on the road and began walking, first light had arrived. The sky was clear, with higher peaks of the Western Andes enveloped in clouds. The dawn chorus was underway: Andean Solitaire, Toucan Barbet, Plumbeous Pigeons, Russet-backed Oropendula, Andean Motmot were all making themselves known. The first birds we could see well enough to identify were four species of tanagers. A White-headed Wren made an appearance. Then a breathtaking view of a male Crested Quetzal, perched nearby for about five seconds. Wow—our day was off to a great start!

Luis and I spent the entire day on the Bangsia Trail, about 7 km out and back. We worked our way slowly, looking and listening. Most of the trail traverses beautiful primary forest, featuring large trees draped with vines, moss, lichens, and bromeliads, and punctuated by occasional openings for longer views and a handful

of stream crossings. It is terminated by a large landslide, several years old. Fog moved in and out throughout the day. We enjoyed the ambience and found many cool birds. We wrapped up in wet mist and fading light with great views of Masked Trogon and Common Potoo. Back on the moto, heading downhill, just before 6 p.m.

Luis knows his birds and their habitats, has a fine-tuned ear and is expert at picking out birds in dense forest with low light. We communicated well with my intermediate Spanish and his willingness to speak more slowly. Fortunately, like most Colombian bird guides, he’s trilingual when it comes to species names: Latin, Spanish, and English!

This was one day of an almost month-long trip that began in early February. I traveled solo, arrived with ideas of places I might want to spend time, and had my first night’s hostel reserved. I figured the rest out as I went, traveling by public transportation. I explored and birded on my own, hiring local guides where available. I spent a few days in each of five locations, covering a nice range of habitats, but only scratching the surface of this huge, diverse country. Clearly another trip is in order!



Orange-breasted Fruiteater.



Masked Trogon.

Field Trips Cancelled for Now

Like so many other social activities during these uncertain times, FCAS will not be hosting any spring or summer field trips. As the field trip coordinator, this is my favorite time of year to plan and lead trips. I take delight in seeing the same friendly familiar faces from the birding community on many of my field trips. I have been leading field trips for over 20 years and one of my great joys is sharing my love of birds with other people. This year will be hard, but I have no doubt I will see many of you on the trails this summer, and we can still smile, wave, and share our bird sightings. We are fortunate to have wonderful natural areas that are accessible for birding, and I hope you continue to get out and take comfort in birding this spring and summer.

It is a possibility we be able to host some late summer trips and I am hopeful by fall we will be able to get back to our normal field trip offerings. Keep an eye on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety/>) for updates over the summer. For now, stay safe and healthy and may you find peace in nature.



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.