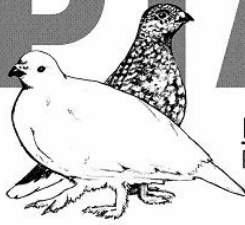


PTARMIGAN



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 2006

Volume 37, Issue 5

Lark Buntings of the Pawnee Grasslands

*Ecologist Amy A. Yackel Adams discusses
their natural history and population status*

Join avian ecologist Amy A. Yackel Adams for a discussion of Colorado's state bird: the Lark Bunting. Between 1966 and 2003, Lark Buntings have declined annually by 2.5% in Colorado and 2.1% in the High Plains physiographic region. Why the decline? Come and find out (or, at least, find out results from recent efforts to answer this question).

The Pawnee National Grassland is an important breeding ground for Lark Buntings, and research there has focused on the species' nesting survival, fledgling survival, and female fecundity. From her years of research, Amy will use photographs, description, and graphs to

inform us of the natural history and population status of the Lark Bunting on the Pawnee National Grassland. Come and develop an awareness of this amazing species and its shortgrass prairie habitat.



This past spring, Amy finished her PhD in Ecology at Colorado State University. Her dissertation research focused on the population demography of Lark Buntings, with emphasis on estimation of post-fledgling survival and factors influencing survival of young and annual fecundity. Cumulatively, Amy has 11 years of grassland bird research experience in both tallgrass and shortgrass prairies.

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAM — January 12, 2006
Ludlow Room, Fort Collins Lincoln Center, 417 W. Magnolia Street
Social Gathering - 7:00 PM, Program - 7:30 PM

FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Visit our website at www.fortnet.org/Audubon or call 970-490-BIRD.

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY FIELD TRIPS

All field trips are free of charge and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Attendees should dress appropriately for the weather. Bring snacks, water, and binoculars and/or spotting scopes if you have them. Carpooling is encouraged. A \$2.00 (unless otherwise specified) contribution per passenger to the driver is suggested. Visit <http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon> for more information. For all field trips and surveys, please contact the trip leader for signup and trip details, or contact the Field Trip Coordinator, Connie Kogler, at ckogler@mac.com or 970-622-9710.

1/8/2006 Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Sol Miller at 970-461-4940 or eagleeye1029@yahoo.com. Meet at 7:00 AM. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city. All levels welcomed. Contact leader for signup and details.

1/14/2006 Saturday. North Weld Raptors. Leader: Gary Lefko at 970-897-2454 or lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org. Visit north Weld County in search of raptors.

1/22/2006 Sunday. Fossil Creek Reservoir Bird Survey. Contact Nick Komar at quetzal65@comcast.net or (970) 416-7527. Fort Collins Audubon performs a monthly bird census for the county. All levels welcomed. Participation limited to five plus leader. Contact leader for signup and trip details.

2/5/2006 Sunday. Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Sol Miller at 970-461-4940 or eagleeye1029@yahoo.com. Meet at 7:00 AM. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the city. All levels welcomed. Contact leader for signup and details.

2/19/2006 Sunday. Fossil Creek Reservoir Bird Survey. Contact Nick Komar at (970) 416-7527. Fort Collins Audubon performs a monthly bird census for the county. All levels welcomed. Participation limited to five plus leader. Contact leader for signup and trip details.

2/25/2006 Saturday. Winter raptor field trip. 9:00 AM to noon. Join raptor biologist Rick Harness for a morning of viewing raptors. The trip will begin in Fort Collins and several prairie dog towns will be visited to view golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, and ferruginous hawks. Concentrations of waterfowl will be visited to view bald eagles. This trip will be limited to 12 people and reservations are required. If you are interested please email Rick Harness at rharness@edmlink.com.

Note: Occasionally, new field trips may be announced or details may be finalized between issues of the *Ptarmigan*. Please visit our website and click on "Field Trips," or call the FCAS message center at 490-BIRD to check for updated field trip information.

FCAS Purchases Spotting Scopes

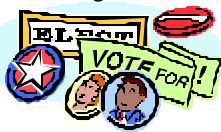
Fort Collins Audubon Society recently purchased two spotting scopes and tripods for use in our field trips and other activities. These scopes will be especially useful for beginning birding field trips and education programs where participants may not have their own scopes. FCAS would like to thank Kroll Factual Data for donations making this purchase possible and Wild Birds Unlimited of Fort Collins for giving FCAS a discount on the purchase price.



Kroll Factual Data

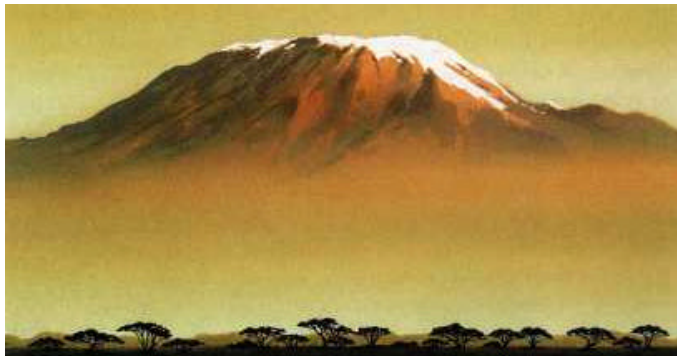
FCAS Elections in January

Please take note that the election of FCAS officers and directors will be held at the January 12, 2006 Program Meeting. Because there is only one name for each elected position, the slate will be adopted by acclamation, unless there are any nominations from the floor. Officers on the slate: President (second year of 2-year term) - Joel Hurmence; President-elect - no candidate; Vice President - Phil Friedman; Secretary - Scott Cobble; Treasurer - John Waddell. Directors on the slate: Beth Dillon, Nick Komar, Ron Harden, Heman Adams, Ruth Grant and Sue Riffe.



FCAS Silent Auction and Special Program Set for February

Plan to take part in our 4th annual FCAS Silent Auction preceding our Special Program Meeting on February 9, 2006. The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Columbine Room of the Fort Collins Lincoln Center. This fundraiser relies on donation of auction items, and friendly competition among generous bidders. The proceeds are



used to finance a number of FCAS endeavors, including our newsletter, programs, educational activities, scholarship fund, and Audubon Colorado lobbyist. Attendees will be treated to a special program following the silent auction. Members of the Fort Collins teen Girl Scout group GECCCOs (Girls Experiencing Camping, Cycling and Canoeing Outdoors) will present a program on their December trip to East Africa, including a safari and the

ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Auction Items: If you have items of good quality that you would be willing to donate, please contact Joel Hurmence at jhurmence@hotmail.com or 970-481-2124.



Avian Appreciation Days at Bath Nursery and Garden Center



Avian Appreciation Days will take place January 28-29, 2006. Fort Collins Audubon will have a booth at the annual event held at Bath Nursery and Garden Center, 2000 E. Prospect Rd. in Fort Collins (<http://bathgardencenter.com/>). This is a great opportunity to learn more about our wild and domesticated feathered friends while telling visitors about the FCAS mission. To volunteer to help staff the FCAS booth, contact Volunteer Coordinator Ellen Wride at 970-215-0056, EVW9609@aol.com. Plan to stop by!

Better Birding, Better Living Lynne Hull, Education Chair

Adopt an IBA proposals for FCAS

What's an IBA? It's an "Important Bird Area", designated by an international program developed to decide the most important bird habitat in the hemispheres, states and regions of countries around the world, including the United States. The American Bird Conservancy and National Audubon have been involved from the early stages. Now, guidebooks and maps of "100 IBAs of the US" and similar publications are coming out. Colorado is designating a number of areas which FCAS member Gary Lefko is trying to connect into the "Great Pike's Peak Birding Trail."

To develop the idea further, FCAS has been invited to adopt two potential IBA sites. One is Fossil Creek Reservoir, where we have had an ongoing monthly bird survey led by Nick Komar. At this time of year, bald eagles roost around the reservoir, so if you have not participated in the survey, it's a great time to do so. We are also looking for ideas for other things we could do for that site, including habitat enhancement, education or interpretation.

Secondly, we have been invited to adopt the Pawnee National Grasslands (PNG) in partnership with the Weld and Denver Audubon chapters and the grasslands administration. They have set specific goals for which they need volunteers. They would like us to participate in providing conservation-oriented input at public hearings and meetings. They are concerned about the impact of recreational target shooting in inappropriate locations within the grasslands. They need help limiting and reducing the impact on birds and wildlife by asking birders to report occurrences of target shooting in closed areas. They ask that birders and hikers volunteer to help remove trash targets (cans, refrigerators, bottles, used cars, etc. and participate in a planned Earth Day haul-out of junk and trash currently being used for target practice or otherwise degrading the habitat.

Also, the PNG would like to recruit and train birders to monitor the impact of habitat assessment and restoration projects by doing bird counts in May, June and July. In particular, there will be targeted monitoring of mountain plover.

And finally, PNG is rebuilding the auto bird tour and closing more of the Pawnee Buttes area for raptor nesting. They would like volunteers to assist in educating users of the grasslands about the need for good and undisturbed bird habitat. Apparently, commercial bird tours have been part of the problem. PNG is looking for a local contact to provide information to bird guides as to where they can view nest sites without disturbing the nesting birds. This volunteer job gets you inside information on nest sites, and contact with some superb, if not totally ethical, bird tour groups.

To be involved with volunteering or at least participating with conservation input and occasional public meetings, please contact volunteer coordinator Ellen Wride at (970) 215-0056 or EVW9609@aol.com. To volunteer for FCAS activities at Fossil Creek Reservoir contact Phil Friedman at phifri@frii.com.



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Fort Collins Audubon Society Members! Free! E-mail News Service Now Available!

- Receive regular news posts on FCAS events
- Get timely monthly meeting reminders
- Hear of volunteer opportunities as they arise

Visit www.fortnet.org/Audubon/ to learn more and to subscribe to this new members-only service.

