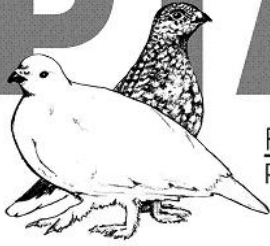


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FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 271968 • Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968 • www.fortnet.org/Audubon

Promoting the appreciation, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems,
focusing on birds and other wildlife, through education, participation, stewardship, and advocacy.

October 2008

Volume 40, Issue 2

Prairie Thunder

The Nature of Colorado's Great Plains

Dave Showalter, Colorado-based photographer and author of *Prairie Thunder – The Nature of Colorado's Great Plains*, has a lifelong interest in natural history and has been photographing in Colorado and the west for over 15 years. Dave's photographs and articles have appeared in a number of publications including *Outside*, *Outdoor Photographer*, *Backpacker*, *Nature Photographer*.

Prairie Thunder – The Nature of Colorado's Great Plains is Dave's first book. Through photographs and words, he explores the often overlooked beauty of Colorado's eastern plains, and addresses their legacy and conversation challenges. From the wind-swept Pawnee Buttes, home to pronghorns and birds of prey, to the Comanche Grasslands area in southeastern Colorado, Dave details the diversity of land and wildlife that makes the area so incredibly special.



Celebrating the beauty of his first book, Dave takes us on an epic journey into the heart of Colorado's vast grasslands. While the stunning views of the Colorado prairie are the foundation of the book, he also addresses the threats to these most endangered landscapes, and alerts us to the severe reduction in bird populations on the Colorado prairie, as detailed by the Colorado Audubon Society's recent report, *Common Birds in Decline*. Many conservation success stories are to be told, generated through partnerships between conservation groups, government agencies and private land owners and Dave includes them in his book also.

Join us for an inspiring evening with Dave Showalter. Books will be on sale for \$20.00. Dave has offered to donate \$3.00 to FCAS from each book sale that evening. For more info on Dave Showalter visit his website at: www.daveshowalter.com

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAM — October 9, 2008
Columbine Room, Fort Collins Lincoln Center, 417 W. Magnolia Street
Social Gathering: 7:00 p.m., Program: 7:30 p.m.

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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Field Trips, Programs, Classes, and Events



October 2008

10/11/08, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural Area Tour. 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Gateway Park. Exploring nature continues with a new schedule of 2nd Saturday adventures. This year we will explore twelve of Fort Collins' natural areas. Each tour will be led by a master naturalist who will explain "What's special about this place?" All tours are from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Directions to Gateway Park: from Fort Collins go northwest on Hwy 287 to Ted's Place, then go west on Hwy 14 for about 5 miles to the entrance to Gateway Natural Area on the right. Proceed to the second parking lot by the water treatment building. We will meet there at 8:00 a.m. For further information, contact Joann Thomas at 970-482-7125 or jthomas91@aol.com.

10/25/08, Saturday. Larimer Lacustrines. Leader: Eric DeFonso (yoericd@yahoo.com or 970-472-1761). 7:30 a.m. to noon. Lacustrines? That's just a 2-dollar word for birds of lakes and reservoirs. We'll look for and study waterfowl (geese, ducks, loons, swans, scoters) in particular, but also note gulls and raptors and anything else in and around various Fort Collins/Loveland area hotspots. Beginners welcome. We'll meet in the parking area at Fossil Creek Regional Open Space (Reservoir), and drive from there to other areas depending on conditions.

November 2008

11/1/08, Sunday. Weather Walk, 1:00-4:00 p.m., Nix Natural Area, Fort Collins. Leader: Eric DeFonso (yoericd@yahoo.com or 970-472-1761). Note the unusual start time. If you've wanted to try one of my weather walks, here's your chance! Come along as we interpret the sky conditions during a pleasant walk on the paved trail at Nix Natural Area. We'll also explore what makes Colorado weather and climate the way it is, and I'll do my best to answer all your sky-related questions! I offer these walks several times throughout the year, at varying times and days of the week, to accommodate your schedules and allow us to observe a wide variety of weather conditions.

11/08/08, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural Area Tour. 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Cathy Fromme Prairie. Exploring nature continues with a new schedule of 2nd Saturday adventures. This year we will explore twelve of Fort Collins' natural areas. Each tour will be led by a master naturalist who will explain "What's special about this place?" All tours are from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. For further information, contact Joann Thomas at 970-482-7125 or jthomas91@aol.com.

All field trips are free of charge (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Participants should dress appropriately for the weather. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Carpooling is encouraged. A \$3.00 (unless otherwise specified) contribution per passenger to the driver is suggested. Visit www.fortnet.org/Audubon for more information. For all field trips and surveys, please contact the trip leader for sign up and trip details. Field Trip Coordinator: Eric DeFonso, yoericd@yahoo.com or 970-472-1761.

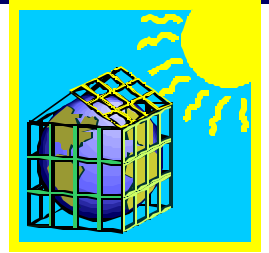
Looking Ahead: Upcoming Programs

November 13, 2008 – Gary Graham, Executive Director of Audubon Colorado, will be speaking to FCAS , at 7:30 pm in the Columbine Room of the Lincoln Center on *Global Warming*. Watch for more details on our website: www.fortnet.org/Audubon, and in the November newsletter.



Global Warming: Canaries in the Coal Mine Warn That Humans Are In Trouble

by Holly Carpenter,
Global Warming Intern for Audubon Colorado



Global warming is now broadly accepted as the greatest conservation challenge facing birds – and humans. The science is now accepted around the world that the earth is becoming so hot as to threaten wildlife and humans alike in the near future. We are fortunate in Colorado to have one of the highest concentrations of climate scientists in the world associated with the NCAR and NOAA and CU, which means we have available some of the best science in the world for our region. We are unfortunate in that CO and much of the west is heating up more than most of the rest of the country.

Impacts on Birds and Other Animals:

Global warming is not just about longer, hotter summers but will likely include increased wildfires and drought, decreased snowpack and upward-moving treelines, and more invasive plant and animal pests. The International Panel on Climate Change predicts that 50-52% of all avian species will decrease in abundance by at least a quarter of their current population, due to changes in geography, reproduction, migration, and pest outbreaks all precipitated by global warming. According to the IPCC, we will see 1/3 of all animal species disappear over the next few decades from complexities associate with the warming of our earth. As in the historical coal mines, these losses with birds and other wildlife predict problems for our species as well.

Impacts on Humans:

In human terms, we will see hundreds of millions of environmental refugees in this century, increased air pollution, the spread of tropical diseases, water shortages and contamination, and

increased frequency of famines. Colorado farmers, ranchers, anglers, and hunters will see the land and habitats they depend on change and perhaps become unusable. Coloradans who live at or below the poverty line will face problems during hotter months, when they can't afford air conditioning.

Solutions:

Humans have caused this and we can reverse it. Whether it is by changing things at home and at work or by becoming involved with local, state and/or federal governments, your actions will make a difference with global warming. Go to our website: www.auduboncolorado.org to find solutions that you can enact. Also, you can find tips on writing your governmental representatives, and letters to the editor. Lastly, sign up on our eactivist list (<http://audubonaction.org/campaign/climateactionpledge>) and we will send you updates on ways to take action – we will not send you any solicitations or use your email address for ANY other purpose. We all want to make sure that canaries continue to sing so please help reduce global warming in any way you can.

JOIN THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT Count for Fun, Count for the Future February 13-16, 2009

New York, NY and Ithaca, NY–Bird and nature fans throughout North America are invited to join tens of thousands of everyday bird watchers for the 12th annual **Great Backyard Bird Count** (GBBC), February 13-16, 2009. A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, this **free event** is an opportunity for families, students, and people of all ages to discover the wonders of nature in backyards, schoolyards, and local parks, and, at the same time, make an important contribution to conservation. Participants count birds and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org.

“The Great Backyard Bird Count benefits both birds and people. It’s a great example of citizen science: Anyone who can identify even a few species can contribute to the body of knowledge that is used to inform conservation efforts to protect birds and biodiversity,” said Audubon Education VP, Judy Braus. “Families,

Continued on next page



Education Corner

By Joann Thomas - Education Chair



Any day outdoors is better than ...

On Saturday, Sept. 13th, we walked our first 2nd Saturday of the new series visiting twelve of Fort Collins' natural areas. What a spectacular day at Riverbend Ponds! The sky's blue was that deep autumn blue; two Ospreys performed aerial displays for us while searching for fish; the group was companionable; our leader, Dr. Dave, an aquatic invertebrate expert, explained the interconnections of wetland habitat. I could have spent the entire day in the field.

People have shared that the time limit of our walks is particularly enticing because they can plan activities for the rest of the day. I too had commitments for Saturday afternoon, but gosh, I wanted to stay outdoors. Riverbend Ponds especially was appealing. I'd never noticed that it contained so many different habitats in such a small space. We viewed a pond dried up to moist mud flats. One of our group had seen an American bittern there on Friday. We saw the deep ponds that were gravel pits now filled with Pelicans feeding. We then passed the wooded area on the banks of the river

that was alive with so many bird calls, it sounded like an atonal chorus. And, all this right in the middle of Fort Collins. I love this city!

In October, we'll venture further afield to Gateway Natural Area. I visited there on Sunday and again was reluctant to leave this beautiful area. We'll walk along the river and view the changing colors of fall. Gateway is located 15 miles northwest of Fort Collins at the confluence of the main stem of the Cache la Poudre River and its north fork tributary. The city has owned the land since the early 1900s for the placement of a water treatment plant which is now closed. (I'm working on getting us a tour of the facility for those who can stay after 10:00 a.m.) Directions to Gateway are located in the Field Trips section of the newsletter.

I look forward to sharing this wonderful series of 2nd Saturday nature walks with you as we explore natural areas that our tax money has purchased. We are lucky to live in a city whose residents value and nurture a connection to nature. See you October 11th!

Continued from previous page

teachers, children and all those who take part in GBBC get a chance to improve their observation skills, enjoy nature, and have a great time counting for fun, counting for the future."

Anyone can take part, from novice bird watchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and reporting their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Participants can also explore what birds others are finding in their backyards--whether in their own neighborhood or thousands of miles away. Additional online resources include tips to help identify birds, a photo gallery, and special materials for educators.



The data these "citizen scientists" collect helps researchers understand bird population trends, information that is critical for effective conservation. Their efforts enable everyone to see what would otherwise be impossible: a comprehensive picture of where birds are in late winter and how their numbers and distribution compare with previous years. In 2008, participants submitted more than 85,000 checklists.

Statistics from 2008
 Total Checklists Submitted: 85,725
 Total Species Observed: 635
 Total Individual Birds Counted: 9,805,216

"The GBBC has become a vital link in the arsenal of continent-wide bird-monitoring projects," said Cornell Lab of Ornithology director, John Fitzpatrick. "With more than a decade of data now in hand, the GBBC

Continued on next page



Welcome new and renewing members!

We hope to see you at our programs and field trips.

Arden Piland
 Tricia Kearns
 Ashley Waddell
 Christi Brockway
 Paul Batchelder

Scott Baily
 Shelley Dahme
 Melannie D Hartman
 Hank Henry



FCAS CONTACTS

Audubon@fortnet.org

President

Joel Hurmence
 970-481-2124

jhurmenge@hotmail.com

Conservation Chair

Bill Miller
 970-493-7693

5mcorp@comcast.net

Membership Chair

Shelagh Tupper
 970-490-BIRD

Shelagh.tupper@gmail.com

Education Chair

Joann Thomas
 970-482-7125

jthomas91@aol.com

Field Trip Coordinator

Eric DeFonso
 970-472-1761

yoeric@yahoo.com

Birdathon Coordinator

Heman Adams
 970-484-8634

hempurdy@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Joe Martin
 970-412-2481

joe3eagles@gmail.com

Address Changes

Shelagh Tupper
 970-490-BIRD

Shelagh.tupper@gmail.com

For other FCAS contacts visit

www.fortnet.org/audubon/leadership.htm

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has documented the fine-grained details of late-winter bird distributions better than any project in history, including some truly striking changes just over the past decade.”

Each year, in addition to entering their tallies, participants submit thousands of digital images for the GBBC photo contest. Many are featured in the popular online gallery. Participants in the 2009 count are also invited to upload their bird videos to YouTube; some will also be featured on the GBBC web site. Visit www.birdcount.org to learn more.

Businesses, schools, nature clubs, Scout troops, and other community organizations interested in the GBBC can contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473 (outside the U.S., call (607) 254-2473), or Audubon at citizenscience@audubon.org or (215) 355-9588, ext 16.



The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible, in part, by support from **Wild Birds Unlimited**.

Most Frequently Reported Birds - 2008

Rank	Species	Checklists
1	Northern Cardinal	43,936
2	Mourning Dove	42,073
3	Dark-eyed Junco	39,477
4	Downy Woodpecker	33,903
5	American Goldfinch	31,775
6	Blue Jay	31,031
7	House Finch	29,975
8	Tufted Titmouse	28,023
9	Black-capped Chickadee	26,757
10	American Crow	26,708

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The current issue of the newsletter is available online to members only. If you'd like to receive an e-mail notification, please e-mail your **name and address as it appears on your newsletter's mailing label** and the e-mail address you wish to use to *shelagh.tupper@gmail.com*. Please indicate e-mail only or both e-mail and paper.

Monthly Newsletter Distribution

Paper: 719 (84.0%)

E-mail: 137 (16.0%)



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Membership Application

Join the Fort Collins Audubon Society (FCAS) directly, or automatically become a member by joining the National Audubon Society (NAS). *Choose one below:*

New or Renewing Member of FCAS (annual dues) **\$15**
 (Receive the *Ptarmigan* newsletter)
 FCAS may share my name with NAS

New Member of NAS & Chapter **\$20**
 (Receive *Audubon* magazine and *Ptarmigan*)

Renewing Member of NAS & Chapter **\$35**
 (Receive *Audubon* magazine and *Ptarmigan*)

Did you know? Less than \$1 of your NAS dues is left for FCAS funds. FCAS serves NAS members through its own fundraising efforts. We appreciate your financial support!

Additional donation to FCAS \$ _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

I prefer to receive the *Ptarmigan* via the FCAS website. Please e-mail me when posted.

Please make your check payable to **FCAS** and send along with this form to: **Fort Collins Audubon Society, PO Box 271968, Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968**

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