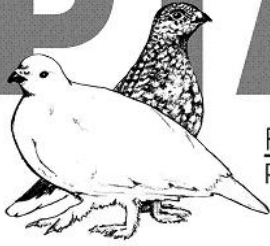


PTARMIGAN



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.

November 2008

Volume 40, Issue 3

Global Warming

Sound Science to Prove It — Practical Solutions to Solve It

Gary Graham, Executive Director of Audubon Colorado will present some of the most up-to-date science on the impacts of global warming on the west and rest of the world. The presentation will include very recent studies on the impact on birds, along with compelling images to make the points. He will then offer several practical opportunities for the public to be involved with solutions.

Gary leads Audubon's global warming strategies in Colorado. He has been the Executive Director of Audubon Colorado for almost six years where he is directing several innovative programs including *Audubon Center for Conservation Careers*, *Restoring the Rio*, *Bird Connections with the World*, *Grasslands and Grouse*, and *Rivers of Birds*. Previous to Audubon, Gary came to Audubon from various positions that included serving with the Texas Parks and Wildlife

Department (TPWD) as Director of the Wildlife Division, being the Chief of the Endangered Resources Branch of TPWD, and acting as the Project Manager for the Texas Watchable Wildlife Program.



Gary holds a Ph.D. in biology from the University of New Mexico where he compared the distribution patterns of birds and bats along elevation gradients in the Peruvian Andes. He has written the *Texas Wildlife Viewing Guide*, a Golden

Guide entitled *Bats of the World*, and numerous scientific and popular articles. Gary is an avid birdwatcher, has studied and watched birds all over the world--most notably in Peru, where he lived for two years. Gary has just recently returned from a trip to Peru and will be including in his presentation a summary of that trip. We invite you to join us!

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAM — November 13, 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



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 email at jthomas91@aol.com.

11/15/08, Saturday. North central Weld County - 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Join the "Nunn Guy" on a trip around Nunn and beyond. We'll check my favorite haunts in

search of raptors, waterfowl, gulls and whatever else might be lingering over from migration or new for winter. Meet at Nunn Cafe on south side of Nunn along Hwy 85--come early for breakfast! RSVP to Gary at leftkogt@coloradobirder.info or 970/897-2454.

December 2008

12/6/08, Saturday. Fall Raptors. 8:00 a.m. - lunchtime. Leader: Eric DeFonso (yoericd@yahoo.com or 970-472-1761). Join us as we look for the hawks, eagles, falcons, and owls that grace our area, even in the fall. We'll meet at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC) in Fort Collins, and carpool from there to places of interest for raptors of any kind. To find the ELC, go to <http://www.rmrp.org/content/view/27/83/> and click on the link for a map to the center, or contact me directly for specific info.

12/13/08, Saturday. Second Saturday Natural Area Tour. 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Nix/Kingfisher/Cattail Chorus Natural Areas. 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 email at 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.

Education Corner

By Joann Thomas - Education Chair

It's raining; it's pouring...

5 a.m. alarm goes off. It's raining.
 6:00 a.m. reviewing bird list. It's raining.
 6:30 a.m., Gloria calls. "It's raining," she mumbles and drifts off.
 7:00 a.m. I pick up Liz. It's raining.
 7:45 a.m. we arrive at Gateway, sit in the car, and talk about breakfast. It's raining.
 8:00 a.m. Debbie Silverman, master naturalist and seasonal employee at Gateway, arrives to lead our walk. It's raining.

Debbie Silverman has a wealth of information about the Gateway natural area where the north fork of the Poudre joins the main river. Here in 1903 Fort Collins built a water treatment plant that operated until 1987. With jagged uplifts of massive rock lining the river banks and

access to acres of recreational land along the river, Gateway provides some of the best birding and wildlife viewing in the Fort Collins area.

Dodging raindrops in dropping temperatures, we wouldn't be out long, I think—hmmm, eggs or pancakes. But, just as we cross the rivers, we hear a bird chirping and twittering. Looking through a wet binocular lens, I squint, dry the lens, change focus, dry the lens, scan the river, and dry the lens. Sitting on a rock in the river, I see a yellow beak, brownish head, grey body, as Liz excitedly calls, "It's a dipper." Almost dropping my binocular, not hard to do with numb fingers in the continuing drizzle,



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I realize that breakfast and warmth are now only a faraway dream. The American Dipper is a life bird for both of us. In fact, during summers when I work with Kevin Cook in CSU's Elderhostel program, we have a running joke about whose van can find a dipper. Kevin always finds one; I never do.

This bird was definitely a young American Dipper and stayed on the rock squawking for the 10 minutes we watched. Well, for a first dipper, not too bad, but also not very exciting. We wandered off down the trail, leaving the youngster singing for his breakfast. Hmmm, pancakes or French toast.

Further along the river, we spotted two adult dippers, faithful parents collecting food for their noisy fledgling. Flicking their tails and bobbing their bodies, they jumped from rock to rock in the rushing river, sometimes dipping beneath the water in search of aquatic insects, including dragonfly nymphs and caddisfly larvae. They also eat tiny fish and tadpoles.

The American Dipper, sometimes called a Water Ouzel, has an extra eyelid called a nictitating membrane that allows it to see underwater and scales that close its nostrils when it submerges. It has a low metabolic rate, extra oxygen-carrying capacity in its blood, and a thick coat of feathers with extra oil to survive as it feeds in cold waters.

The American Dipper's nest is a dome-shaped

structure with a side entrance, built of moss, grass, and leaves close to fast moving water on a rock ledge, river bank, behind a waterfall, or under a bridge. The normal clutch is 24 white eggs, incubated solely by the female, which hatch after about 15-17 days, with another 20-25 days to fledging. The male helps to feed the young. The young bird we saw must have been the last of a clutch to fledge.

A permanent resident, the dipper may move slightly south or to lower elevations if necessary to find food or unfrozen water. The American Dipper is an indicator species whose presence shows good water quality; it has vanished from some locations due to pollution or increased silt load in streams. The American Dipper family that we watched on Saturday confirms the excellent quality of water we have in the Poudre River today at Gateway and I reflect on the future. With the possible silting of the river due to reduced flow with the construction of Glade Reservoir, the American Dipper would not remain here. I am so very thrilled to have seen them.

Here, at Gateway, on a magnificent cold rainy day, I saw my first American Dipper...not one, not two, but a family of three. What began as a wet, cold, grey day suddenly became a bright spot in my birding life. Filled with warmth and excitement, I'm still smiling. Who needs food when the soul is so thoroughly nourished!

Saving Two Birds with One New Energy Policy: *Solving the U.S. Energy Crisis and Global Warming*

To solve the quandary that we are in with the growing effects of global warming and its intricate connection to our current energy economy, Congress and the President need to come up with a new energy policy that provides for a clean energy economy and addresses the following key points:



1. Reduce through enforceable laws carbon emissions from gas, oil, and coal by 20% from current levels by 2020, and an 80% reduction below 1990 levels by 2050.

2. Commit to the financial investments and policies that will stabilize energy costs, invigorate the economy, and create new jobs. This should include government assistance for research and development, standards for smart urban/rural growth, energy efficient building codes, and electric grid efficiency mandates. We also need to make sure that efforts to produce renewable energy like wind and solar do not create additional severe impacts to birds and other wildlife.

3. To minimize the economic impacts of transitioning to a clean energy economy, we must assist workers and communities most affected. Public assets must be used in a fair and transparent manner and any revenues from a cap and trade system should be returned to consumers, workers, and communities. Legislation will need to provide incentives to developing countries to reduce emissions and protect the U.S. against global trade disadvantages.

4. Protect the ecosystems and communities that are the most vulnerable to the physical effects of global warming. A portion of the revenues from a cap and trade system should go to state and local governments to both respond to the physical impacts of global warming, like fire and flooding, and to maximize survival of wildlife species and ecosystems that are facing destruction. Finally, developed countries will need to assist developing countries that face destabilization from the effects of global warming.

The challenges are great but if we keep our spotting scopes focused on the goals, we can solve both the energy crisis and global warming.

To get involved, please go to www.AudubonWeCan.org and sign up on our climate action pledge!

Holly Carpenter, Global Warming Intern, Audubon Colorado, (303) 415 0130





Conservation Corner

By Bill Miller - Conservation Chair

NISP and GLADE, DEIS

I've written on this subject before (March, April and May 2008 issues of the *Ptarmigan*) and it seems that there is no end to what can be written about it. September was also disappointing to me, in that I had serious computer problems that manifested themselves just a few paragraphs shy of finishing this article for inclusion in the October issue of the *Ptarmigan*. But on the positive side of my computer problems, all of my documents were salvageable and I was able to retrieve this article from the dust heap of electrons laying around in cyberspace somewhere. I am also able to include some positive developments that occurred after my computer took a vacation. Therefore, the article will be submitted under two dates.

SEPTEMBER 14, 2008

September was an exciting month, even if filled with suspense and some trepidation. The complex subject of the Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP) has been occupying much of the time of many people who view the project being proposed by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (NCWCD) unfavorably.

Under the NISP scenario, water from the Poudre River would be diverted from near the mouth of its canyon into a fore bay, to be constructed very close to the old Atlas "E" Missile Site 13 located to the northwest of Ted's Place. Water would then be pumped from the fore bay up into Glade Reservoir to the north, larger than Horsetooth Reservoir at 177,000 acre-feet capacity. This water would then be distributed to the 15 cities and water supply districts that are participating in NISP, most of which lie outside of the Poudre River basin. Fort Collins, Loveland and Greeley are not participants in NISP.

I will try to summarize things for you. But, for you to gain a better grasp of what we are talking about, I suggest that you review the documents for which I have provided links.

- * The Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) released their Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on April 29th, 2008, with a 90-day comment period to end on July 28, 2008.
<https://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/html/od-tl/eis-info.htm>
- * The DEIS comment period was extended 45 days until Sept. 13, 2008
- ? The Fort Collins City Council had authorized a total of \$700,000 for approximately 24 staff members from several departments to analyze the DEIS to determine what impacts Fort Collins could expect if Glade Reservoir and NISP were constructed. Staff's findings and a draft resolution expressing the Council's opposition to NISP as described in the DEIS were presented to Council on September 2, 2008. The

Council, 6-0, unanimously approved the resolution opposing NISP as described in the DEIS. <http://citydocs.fcgov.com/cmd=convert&vid=72&docid=1303915>

Concerns expressed in the staff findings pertained to the following general issues: water supply and treatment; water reclamation; Trichloroethylene (TCE); river sedimentation; riparian vegetation and wetlands; aquatic habitat and aquatic life; terrestrial wildlife; recreation; economics; aesthetics; and quality of life.

Water Supply and Treatment – concerns were expressed that if, in the future, Glade Reservoir were connected to Horsetooth Reservoir the waters drawn from Horsetooth by Fort Collins for drinking water could contain high quantities of Total

Organic Carbon (TOC) derived from the Poudre waters. These would have to be removed from the drinking water supply because chlorination would produce carcinogens and the presence of TOC would be disruptive to sensitive commercial processes as found in breweries and electronics manufacturing. Estimated cost of TOC removal: \$50 - \$90 million in one-time equipment upgrades, plus an additional \$3 million in increased annual operating costs

Water Reclamation – because water flows in the Poudre River would be reduced considerably, the dilution effect on waste water discharges from two waste water treatment plants would be affected negatively, and would require equipment upgrades by Fort Collins. Estimated costs: \$125 - \$215 million, plus unspecified increased annual operating costs. The communities of Laporte, Timnath, Windsor, and possibly Greeley, would also experience similar expenses associated with waste water treatment and discharges.

Trichloroethylene (TCE) – remember the Atlas missile site? There is a plume of contaminated ground water containing TCE, a solvent that was used to clean the rocket fuel tanks.

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Chronic exposure to TCE can result in liver damage and, over long periods of time, may cause cancer. It is suggested that the presence of water in both the fore bay as well as in Glade Reservoir could exert hydraulic pressure on the plume of contaminated ground water and accelerate its rate of flow toward – you guessed it – the Poudre River.

River Sedimentation – the removal of water from the Poudre River below the take-out point for Glade would

mean that there would be less water to keep sediment from accumulating in the river

channel. The results would include: a narrowing of the channel; a buildup of sand bars that would promote increased vegetation growth and; an elevation increase of the 100-year flood plain because the flow carrying capacity of the river during flood events has been reduced.

Riparian Vegetation and Wetlands – riparian vegetation would be affected in two ways: (a) a promotion of invasive plant species on the sandbars due to the removal of “flushing” flows, and (b) a lowering of the ground water levels in the riparian corridor causing a drying out of the soils in the riparian corridor. This would have considerable negative impacts on the cottonwoods and other trees in shrubs in the corridor as well as on wetlands found along the river corridor.

Aquatic Habitat and Aquatic Life – increased levels of sediment deposition would smother aquatic life that other species are dependent on, as well as the eggs of fish that spawn in the river. Lower and slower flows will result in a rise in water temperatures that would mean the end to the cold water trout fishery that currently exists.

Terrestrial Wildlife – 82% of all breeding birds in northern Colorado occur in riparian habitats. Long-term impacts are foreseen to include loss of mature cottonwood forests, homogenization of habitats with invasions of non-native weed species, and a subsequent reduced diversity of wildlife guilds. This would reduce the wildlife values of the 1423 acres of natural areas that the citizens of Fort Collins acquired, at a cost of over \$8 million, with the natural area tax to preserve those lands.

Recreation – the proposed kayak park would not be feasible, and it is estimated that visitation to the river, its natural areas and its trails, would be reduced by a third.

Economics – many of the ongoing socioeconomic plans within the City of Fort Collins are predicated on a healthy and robust Poudre river ecosystem.

Aesthetics – while hard to quantify and to assign a monetary value to, I think we can all agree that a river

without water is less pleasing than one with water.

Quality of Life – There is very little doubt that the quality of life of Fort Collins residents and of others who live along the Poudre River would be reduced if more water is removed from the Poudre. There would be significant environmental degradation as the riparian corridor dries out, the vegetation changes and wildlife adapts to a more severe ecosystem (read that as much wildlife will disappear). There is also the possibility of increased

financial expenses to tax- and rate-payers in Fort Collins as well as an overall degradation in the

aesthetic values of the river corridor.

* Fort Collins Audubon Society submitted its own comments to the Corps on September 11th. Our comments can be viewed at our website, <http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon/>, on our home page, under Glade Reservoir.

My computer went south on Sunday, September 14th, so the remainder of this article was written on or after October 10th, 2008.

On September 12th (the day before the deadline to submit comments to the Corps on the DEIS) scientists from the State of Colorado Water Quality Control Division (CWQCD) weighed in on the DEIS in a 9-page letter, and which can be found at <http://www.savethepoudre.org/docs/wqcd-nisp-letter-and-comments-9-12-08.pdf>.

Comments within the letter were very critical of the project and were organized in eight areas of concern, including: general, drinking water, 303(d) listing, temperature, aquatic life, groundwater, nutrients, and agriculture. Some of the CWQCD comments specifically addressed:

- In general, the DEIS does not adequately quantify water quality impacts, pointing out that data from only one year, 2002, was cited.
- Since NISP is focused on supplying additional municipal water supplies, the effects on untreated or raw source water for drinking water providers needs to be addressed. It was pointed out that two diversion structures, including the one for Glade, are above Greeley's diversion point but that the direct correlation between reduced flows and drinking water quality prior to treatment is not addressed.
- Comments were provided about 303(d) issues of the Clean Water Act as pertaining to the exacerbation of increased levels of pH copper, selenium and *E. coli*. It was pointed out that a discussion of current temperature regimes was missing, as an increase in water temperatures would have serious negative impacts upon aquatic life.

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- Aquatic life would be impacted by an increase in sediment deposition upon the reduction in flow levels. Also, aquatic life would be negatively impacted by the lowering of ground water levels resulting in a reduction of the riparian cover, allowing more sunlight to reach the river waters and raising water temperatures.
- The DEIS fails to provide data to support its assumption that the three reservoirs will have negligible effect on ground water quality. Selenium loading is also ignored, as is any influence on the trichloroethylene plume that contaminates the ground water near the Atlas missile site.
- The DEIS lacks information on the effects of large reservoir fluctuations in both Glade and Horsetooth reservoirs and their influence upon mercury levels in fish, oxygen depletion and manganese concentrations.

The DEIS fails to address agricultural impacts that arise from using already saline water from the Platte River to fill the proposed Galeton Reservoir which would lie on marine

shales, as well as selenium mobilization.

In other words, the concerns raised by the CWQCD in their letter reinforce the concerns raised by both the City of Fort Collins and the Save The Poudre Coalition.

“When the well is dry, we know the worth of water.”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790)

Poor Richard's Almanac, 1746

As was recently pointed out in a letter to the editor by Linda Stanley, the subscribers of NISP will enjoy the pricey new water supplies derived from the Poudre

River while the communities along the river will suffer the environmental costs. (Fort Morgan will have to contribute \$270,000 to NISP in 2009, \$648,000 in 2010 and \$527,000 in 2011. Payments of about \$5.87 million each year would start in 2012 and continue through 2016)

Stay tuned, but I think NISP is facing some serious challenges. We may be able to enjoy the Poudre well into the era of Global Climate Disruption (formerly Global Warming).

Better Living, Better Birding

by Lynne Hull

Audubon Colorado, our state organization, offered local chapters small grants to raise awareness and help members and local residents make changes in their lifestyles to reduce the impacts of climate change. Considering the impacts already occurring for birds and other wildlife, national, state and local Audubon feel this is an extremely important issue. As an artist, I had created a sticker project last year for an art exhibit, “Weather Report: Art and Climate Change” in Boulder, Colorado, referenced in a previous BL, BB article. FCAS was given a grant to reprint the stickers and distribute them in Fort Collins to members and other interested participants. The stickers look like the image on the next page, larger and greener in reference to the old “ecology” symbol.



fuel efficient car, taking the bus, eating local organic food,

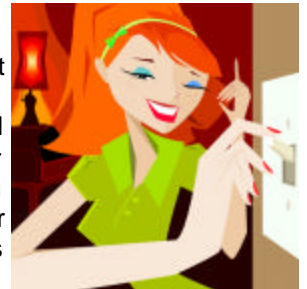
riding a bike, and many more. Here is the idea behind the stickers: I have created “Cool Choice” stickers to be posted where anyone seeing the “prompt” sticker has small lifestyle choices to make and is reminded by the sticker that one choice helps save energy and reduce global warming: Using a push door instead of an electric one, using stairs instead of elevators, driving a

riding a bike, and many more.

You can also use them to point out a personal change you have made on behalf of reducing global warming: Put one on your bike or skateboard, on a baby stroller you walk to the library, on the car you’ve gotten that gets better gas mileage, by the thermostat you’re lowering by a few degrees, by a light switch you need to remind yourself to turn off. You might be able to post multiple stickers at your place of work or somewhere you volunteer. Stickers will be available at the next program meeting.

In addition, I have started a blog where participants can post their ideas of appropriate places for the reminders. After you put up your sticker, take a digital snapshot and send it to the email address on the next page, and I’ll post it on the blog.

I invite businesses, government entities and community members to participate in posting stickers where these lifestyle changes can have a positive effect. In addition, Audubon Colorado invites you to sign up on the website listed on the next page to receive occasional information (once or twice a month) and updates on climate change issues and actions you can take.





Welcome new and renewing members!
 We hope to see you at our programs and field trips.

Sandra Tinsman
 Parker Preble
 Georgia Doyle
 Larry and Margie Caswell

Patrick Damone
 William O West
 Robert Schurman



Cool Choice Sticker

How-to Guidelines:

1. Get stickers by sending a SASE to Cool Choice, PO Box 1239, Fort Collins, Colorado 80522 , pick them up at an FCAS meeting, or contact me at (970) 416-1881 or coolchoice@eco-art.org.
2. Research or imagine a place to post your sticker.
3. Get permission to post it (this informs and involves more people in the action)
4. Post and photograph it and send to coolchoice@eco-art.org for posting
5. Take the pledge: follow through on using the "cool choices" you and others post
6. Sign up for action alerts on climate change at: <http://audubonaction.org/campaign/climateactionpledge>
7. Extra credit: work with a large building owner, corporation big box store, factory, or government entity, to inventory their products & post stickers regarding their organizational ecology, merchandise/product ecology, or do a general environmental assessment of their place and process. Effluent & waste is lost income for the company!

Stay updated at <http://coolchoicesticker.blogspot.com>

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www.fortnet.org/audubon/leadership.htm

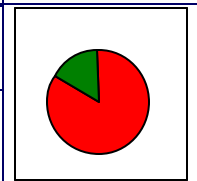


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<i>In This Issue!</i>	
Regular Monthly Features	
November Program - Global Warming	Page 1
Field Trips, Programs, Classes, and Events	Page 2
Education Corner	Page 2
Conservation Corner	Page 4
Better Living, Better Birding	Page 6
Welcome To Our New And Renewing Members!	Page 7
Get Your Newsletter Online	Page 7
FCAS Contacts	Page 7
This Month's Features	
Saving Two Birds With One New Energy Policy	Page 3

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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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