

ptarmigan

MARCH 2002

Fort Collins Audubon Society

Volume 33 Number 6



Trying Times for TOADS

Beaver ponds, lakes, wet meadows and other mountain habitats once were the haunts of a fist-sized amphibian known as the boreal toad. Biologists historically encountered this high-altitude toad in most of Colorado's mountain ranges and considered it common.

Although several populations remain scattered through the mountains of Colorado, in recent years their numbers became so reduced that in 1993 the Colorado Division of Wildlife listed them as endangered. For years, these declines represented the worst kind of mystery — the toads had disappeared, but there were few clues as to the cause.

Recent research by the CDOW and others has begun writing a new chapter in the boreal



toad's story. We still may not know how the story ends, but researchers have identified a key suspect in the drama, an amphibian disease caused by a type of chytrid fungus with the tongue-twisting name of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*.

Lauren Livo has been conducting boreal toad research for the CDOW and the University of Colorado. She will present information about some of the latest discoveries affecting the boreal toad as well as other declining amphibians.

For more information on activities, programs, and field trips of the Fort Collins Audubon Society, check the Web page at: www.fortnet.org/audubon.

Photo Source: www.mesc.usgs.gov/borealtoad/research.htm

WHEN: Thursday Evening
March 21, 2002
7:30 pm

WHERE: Ludlow Room
Fort Collins Lincoln Center
417 Magnolia Street



All field trips are open to the public and free of charge. No prior experience is necessary. Please call field trip coordinator Nick Komar at 970-416-7527, or e-mail him at quetzal65@attbi.com for more information.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9

BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS — 8–10:30 am

Meet in Fort Collins at the parking area for Prospect Ponds on Sharp Point Rd (across from Heska Corp.) We will hike the Poudre River Trail from the feedlot pond to the raptor cages at the Environmental Learning Center (hiking distance about two miles). This hike is wheelchair accessible. Children accompanied by adults are welcome. Bring binoculars, snacks, and water. Contact leader Bill Miller for more information, 970-493-7693, 5mcorp@verinet.com.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

WILDLIFE WATCH — 9am - 1pm

Do you love wildlife and nature? Join the **Colorado Division of Wildlife** at Lory State Park in Fort Collins. Learn where, when and how to see wildlife at this fun, wildlife viewing-skills program. Sharpen your senses to sights and sounds. Discover wildlife habitats, use binoculars & field guides. A short trail walk follows dynamic presentations and informative, hands-on activities. Cost is \$15 per person or household, Ages 12 & over. RSVP: 970-686-6775 or www.wildlifewatch.net.

SUNDAY MARCH 17

GULLS — 3–6 pm

The Front Range attracts multitudes of gulls of many species during migration, and the Loveland area is one of the best for viewing these interesting gulls. Meet for carpooling at the Lake Loveland Swim Beach (North Lake Park off Taft Rd in Loveland). Contact leader Nick Komar for more information, 970-416-7527, quetzal65@attbi.com.

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

EARLY SPRING ON THE PAWNEE — 8–3 pm

Meet at the Colorado Welcome Center for carpooling to the Pawnee National Grasslands in search of raptors, longspurs, and early spring migrants. Bring food, water and clothing for unpredictable weather. Register to participate by calling leader Phil Friedman, 970-493-2959, phifri@frii.com.

BE A CITY OF FORT COLLINS MASTER NATURALIST!

Do you like nature? Do you like working with children or adults? Do you have some spare time?

You may be a candidate for the City of Fort Collins Master Naturalist Program. Volunteers attend a training program and learn about basic ecology, the values and benefits of natural areas, common plants and animals found in different habitat types, and how to communicate this information to others. The Master Naturalists learn how to conduct hands-on fun field trips in local natural areas or in classrooms. Each participant commits to at least 40 hours of volunteer time in our public outreach program.

Recently, Master Naturalists were trail hosts at Coyote Ridge Natural Area. They presented programs about wildflowers, coyotes, and other wildlife, answered questions, enjoyed beautiful scenery, and had a rewarding experience.

Other examples of volunteer activities include:

- developing and presenting slide shows on wildflowers to seniors
- constructing displays about nature in Fort Collins
- staffing public education booths at community events
- discovering insects with preschoolers
- organizing art projects with a nature theme
- teaching Scouts about prairie dog behaviors
- tracking down wildlife with plaster casts in after school programs

Training will be held every Wednesday, 12–3:30 pm, April 3–May 22. Saturday field trips to Fort Collins natural areas are also part of the training and will be on April 13, April 27, May 4, May 18 and June 1. This schedule is subject to change. There is no charge for the training program and all materials are provided.

Interested citizens must fill out an application to be considered. Applications are available on the Web at <http://fcgov.com/naturalareas/pdf/master-nat-app.pdf>, or pick one up at the Natural Resources Department at 281 North College Avenue, or call Sue Kenney, Natural Areas Education Coordinator, at 224-6118. The application deadline is March 22, 2002.

NATURE CENTER COMMITTEE UPDATE

Our Nature Center Committee welcomes the following new members: Lisa Evans, Nate Donovan, Ann Molison and Ron Harden. Although a vision for our own Audubon Center is still to be determined, we have initiated a market analysis to evaluate potential niches for such a center. If you are interested in joining our committee, contact Nick Komar at 416-7527, quetzal65@attbi.com. The next meeting will be March 18 at 7 pm."

CONSERVATION CORNER

Bill Miller, FCAS Conservation Chair

Boy! Talk about writer's block! I've been having a hard time determining just what my contribution would be to the Ptarmigan this month. I mentally began a thread about how spring is approaching, evidenced by the Juncos making their kissing sound and the neighborhood male Red-shafted Flickers making their territorial calls, soon to be followed by their drilling on any metallic object in the area. I then started thinking about the particular significance of spring this year. I am concerned that one fallout of September 11 is that actions are being waged on the natural resources of America under the guise of being necessary for national security. The Bush Administration is extending favors to corporations (repeal of the alternative minimum tax, the Energy Policy) that, ultimately, will affect the financial well being of taxpayers as well as those who refresh their souls through a personal relationship with nature. We are seeing an unprecedented level of actual and attempted assaults on the natural resources of the country:

- Drilling on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
- A rollback of regulations that protect 60 million acres of national forest
- Cuts in funding for renewable energy sources and reductions in vehicle efficiency goals

Here in Colorado, we continue to lose habitat at unprecedented rates because we, as citizens and governments, can't seem to agree on *how* to control our own actions associated with development, community size, and densities. We still can't put in place those regulations that would require local and county governments to address environmental considerations during the development planning and review processes. I am encouraged that citizens are becoming more open and vocal about their concerns. But we have a long way to go before we reach consensus on how we can provide for our needs and conduct ourselves in a sustainable fashion, while leaving places for nature that aren't overwhelmed by our impacts on the landscape.

What's refreshing to see is the direction in which Fort Collins Audubon Society appears to be headed. And that's UP! We have been fortunate to add four new members to the Board of Directors, and we are looking forward to the ideas that they will contribute. We are benefiting from an aggressive series of field trips. The field trips have provided a means to interface with the public in general, as well as with the Fort Collins Newcomers Club. In turn, the Newcomers Club has not only provided a venue to get out our "message" but also has become a source of new members, thus keeping our new Membership Chair somewhat busy. We are moving forward with the idea of a Nature Center and rethinking our whole Education Program. We are active in providing information about state legislation. And we are aggressively pursuing new members.

Since we are a volunteer organization with no paid staff, we can move forward as an organization only as fast as the schedules of involved volunteers permit. There are plenty of opportunities for members to participate, such as on the cleanups for our "adopted" natural area, staffing our display at events (Bath

*"Only after the last tree has been cut down;
Only after the last fish has been caught;
Only after the last river has been poisoned;
Only then will you realize that money cannot be eaten."
– Cree Indian Prophecy*

Landscape Avian Appreciation Days, Earth Day, Poudre Riverfest,) leading field trips (we'll give you ideas on how to do that), participating in the upcoming Birdathon or the next Christmas Bird Count, or in unexplored ways.

Not only do we encourage your involvement in Fort Collins Audubon Society, we also welcome your comments on what we might do to entice your participation. You may call or e-mail me if you have any ideas.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE MARINE FISHERIES ACT

Five decades ago (1950) we had, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures, 2.56 billion people in the world. At the beginning of 2002 the world had 6.23 billion people, an increase of about 244%. During that same period (1950 – 2002) the US population has increased 189%, from 151.3 million to 286.5 million people. In 1950 the oceans were described as having "unlimited resources." Today 107 species of marine fishes have been identified as being overfished in US waters alone.

National Audubon has a Living Oceans Program and campaign underway right now to alert people to the severity to which U.S. waters are being overfished. You may access this campaign at: www.audubon.org/campaign/lo (that is "lo" as in "Living Oceans.") You may download a version of their "Seafood Wallet Card," on which are listed a variety of seafood that has been ranked from "green" to "red," based on abundance and health of the general population. It might surprise you to find that wild scallops and shrimp (wild and farmed) are both in the red category.

National Audubon is urging members of the US House of Representatives to cosponsor H.R. 2570, The Fisheries Recovery Act of 2001. Last year a record high of 107 species of marine fishes were identified as being overfished—being caught and killed at faster than they can reproduce—in US waters. Simultaneously habitat essential to the survival of many species is being destroyed by fishing practices, as are also billions of pounds of fish, seabirds, and turtles caught and wastefully discarded each year by US fishermen.

You are encouraged to contact Representative Bob Schaffer to strongly urge him to cosponsor or otherwise support H.R. 2570, The Fisheries Recovery Act of 2001. Representative Schaffer can be reached, as follows:

Washington DC Address:

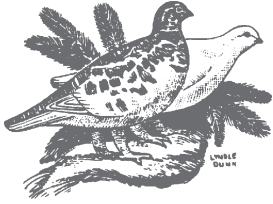
212 Cannon House Office Building, Zip 20515-0604
Phone: 202-225-4676 / Fax: 202-225-5870

Ó Rep.Schaffer@mail.house.gov

Fort Collins: 123 N. College, Suite 260B
Phone: ????????

Greeley: 801 8th Street, #220E, Zip 80631
Phone: 970-353-3507

A related web site from The marine Fish Conservation Network is: www.conservefish.org.



Fort Collins Audubon Society
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 Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968

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UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, March 9

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5mcorp@verinet.com

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**National Audubon Society Chapter
 Membership Application**

YES, I'd like to join.
 YES, I'd like to renew (by phone 1-800-274-4201)

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send Audubon Magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed.
 STUDENTS/SENIORS My check for \$15 is enclosed.
 OR charge my credit card: _____
 Expiration date: _____

Please make your check payable to **Audubon** and send along with this form to:

**National Audubon Society
 Chapter Membership Data Center
 PO Box 51001
 Boulder, CO 80322-1001**

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

Local Chapter Fort Collins Audubon Society D06
 Local Chapter Code: 7XCHA

The mission of Fort Collins Audubon Society is to promote the appreciation, conservation and restoration of ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, through education, participation, stewardship, and advocacy.