

MAY 2004

ptarmigan

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Fort Collins Audubon Society

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

Cranes Of The World *A presentation by ecologist Ken Strom*

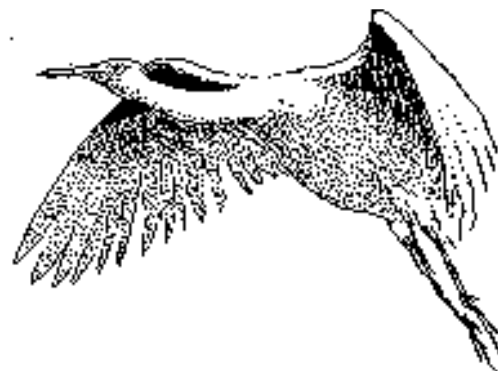
Ken Strom will present a program on "Cranes of the World," using slides and stories to explore the lives and habits of this unique and ancient group of birds. Ken draws on his experiences with cranes on five continents to shed light on the fascinating biology and behavior of the 15 living species of cranes.

Why have so many human cultures felt a special connection to cranes? Why are so many crane species endangered and why are the white-plumaged cranes the most endangered of all?

Most of the world's crane species are found in Asia, but the largest crane spectacle on earth takes place every year less than 400 miles from Fort Collins. And while there are only two crane species that are native to North America, one of them is the most numerous crane in the world and the other is the rarest.

Ken Strom is the Director of Bird Conservation and Public Policy for Audubon Colorado.

Previously, he directed Audubon's Population & Habitat Program, which works to address the impacts of population growth on wildlife habitats around the world. A graduate of Cornell University, Ken is an ecologist who has specialized in the management and restoration of rivers and wetland habitats of waterbirds and other wildlife. For over a decade he managed Audubon's Rowe Wildlife Sanctuary, a critical habitat for Whooping Cranes, Sandhill Cranes and shorebirds along the Platte River in Nebraska. In the



1990s Ken coordinated the Sharing the Earth Project, a series of international partnerships in which he advised scientists and policy-makers in Russia, China, Japan and Pakistan on conservation strategies to protect crane populations in Asia. Some of this work is described in the book *Sharing the Earth*, which he co-authored and co-edited.

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAM — May 13, 2004
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



MAY - JULY

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips are free of charge and open to the public, regardless of experience level. 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. Contact the leader for the field trip in which you are interested or Field Trips Coordinator, Gary Lefko at lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org or 970-897-2454.

05/14/04-05/15/04 Friday-Saturday - Birdathon!!

See this announcement on the insert page.

05/16/04, 6/20/04, 07/18/04, 08/15/04 Sunday - Fossil Creek Reservoir Bird Survey. Leader: Nick Komar at quetzal65@comcast.net. Monthly bird survey led by FCAS. Fossil Creek Reservoir is a Colorado Important Birding Area (IBA) scheduled to open this fall.

05/22/04 Saturday - Cheyenne Area Birding. Leader: Gary Lefko at lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org or 970-897-2454. Lion's Park (Wyoming IBA), Holliday Park, Hereford Ranch (Wyoming IBA) and nearby reservoirs, Little America and FE Warren Air Force Base. Lion's Park and Hereford Ranch offer warblers and many other species. Warren AFB is home to 200+ species. Limit 8 unless we get another participant with a valid military ID to access the base.

06/05/04 Saturday - First Annual Pikes Peak Birding Festival Presented by Aiken Audubon, Great Pikes Peak Birding Trail and Fountain Creek Regional Park. Leader: Gary Lefko at lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org or 970-897-2454. Fountain Creek Regional Park, in Colorado Springs, hosts this all-day family event, including HawkQuest, the Air Force Academy's falcon demonstration team, bird banding, Colorado Division of Wildlife's "Watchable Wildlife Program", guided bird walks, and public viewing scopes.

06/11/04-06/13/04 Friday-Sunday - FCAS Annual Canoe Trip. See this announcement on the insert page.

06/18/04-06/20/04 Friday-Sunday - Birdwatching Campout at Friend Park, Medicine Bow National Forest. Leader: Barb Gorges at bgorges2@juno.com or 307-634-0463. Join the weekend program at any time, beginning with Friday night pitching camp or staying in a Douglas motel. Saturday at 6 a.m. campground birding. At 9 a.m. Tim Byer, USFS biologist, will lead a trip to look at burn areas and other forest habitat. Pack lunch, water and rain gear. At 6 p.m. campground potluck and a short program, topic TBA. Sunday at 6 a.m. explore local vicinity before packing up and birding our way home--or first make the 10-mile round trip hike to the top of Laramie Peak. 8 campsites have been reserved at the Friend Park campground, located at Laramie Peak trailhead.

06/19/04 Saturday - Sneak preview of Fort Collins' newest

natural area: the 2,600 acre Bobcat Ridge, southwest of Fort Collins. Leader: Gary Lefko at lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org or 970-897-2454. A portion of this area burned in the Bobcat Fire in 2000. The burned area has been re-seeded, and a high diversity of native grasses and wildflowers have become established. Its foothills grasslands, shrublands, forests and riparian areas support large populations of elk, mule deer, wild turkey, mountain lions, bobcats, raptors, black bears and songbirds. The area rises from 5,000 to 7,000 feet in elevation. Grasslands are dominant at lower elevations. At higher elevations, ponderosa pine and Douglas fir are dominant. Not yet open to the public, a management and stewardship plan is being developed in 2004-2005, and is projected to open in 2006. Meet 8:00AM at the gas station on northwest corner of Taft Hill Road and Harmony Road. We will take a city van to the natural area — private vehicles are not permitted. We will return in early afternoon. This field trip is limited to 14 people. Dress for hot summer conditions as well as rain showers, and a rocky trail. We will hike 3-5 miles. Bring plenty to drink and a sack lunch. There are no water or bathroom facilities at Bobcat Ridge.

06/26/04 Saturday - Burrowing Owls. Leader: Bill Miller at 5mcorp@verinet.com or 970-493-7693. 7:00AM to 1:00PM. Trip will visit known Burrowing Owl and Mountain Plover sites in Weld County. Call for meeting time and location. Carpooling required - \$3/person to driver is suggested. Participation limited to 15 plus leader.

07/10/04 Saturday - Wellington State Wildlife Area. Leader: Gary Lefko at lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org or 970-897-2454. Meet 7:00AM at Texaco at Wellington exit. This is a small but very active wildlife area. We'll also visit my house to see Burrowing Owls. If there is interest we can take a short trip to WCR 124 ponds.

07/24/04 Saturday-Where do I find birds in my town?. Leader: Gary Lefko at lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org or 970-897-2454. Meet 7:30AM at Colorado Welcome Center parking lot. Join us for our new monthly bird watching field trip series. Once a month we'll be visiting **your** town to show **you** where to find **your** birds. This month's stop: Fort Collins, CO. There will be a short presentation from the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands and the Fort Collins Natural Areas programs prior to departure for field trip.

CONSERVATION CORNER - Carol Fiore, Chair

As promised, here are some resources that discuss the ecological impact of domestic cats on birds. The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) sponsors a program called **Cats Indoors! The Campaign for Safer Birds and Cats**. The email address is: abc@abcbirds.org You may also wish to check out the website at www.geocities.com/the_srco for more resources and tips about cats and birds. The bottom line is clear. Keep cats inside, especially during the spring.

Conservation Committee Meeting:

There will be a meeting of the conservation committee on Monday, May 3rd, at 7 p.m. All interested people are invited. Please call Carol at 461-8760 for more information or email at: rockyzoo@earthlink.net . We will be discussing a bill currently before the U.S. Congress on grazing as well as defining future planning. Join us!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Bill Miller

As we put the May issue of the Ptarmigan together it is with the realization that we will go “dormant” for the summer months. Dormant in the sense that we will not be holding scheduled program meetings in June, July, and August. However, there will continue to be some field trips throughout the summer, thru September 5th. And our Board of Directors will continue to hold scheduled Board meetings and work on issues and concerns between the Board meetings throughout the summer.

Our mission statement, printed in the masthead of the Ptarmigan each month, specifies that we will promote the appreciation, conservation and restoration of ecosystems. One way in which this is to be accomplished is through advocacy. Typically, advocacy efforts have been weak, and were usually due to the efforts of one person working in the absence of well-defined chapter guidelines. Our Conservation Committee will be addressing that weakness at its first meeting on Monday, May 3rd (see CONSERVATION CORNER). Several volunteers have stepped forward to assist Conservation Committee Chair Carol Fiore (pronounced “Fee – or – ray”) in developing committee operating guidelines. The committee has already reviewed the issue of grazing on public lands and will present its recommendation to the Board at its May 6th meeting.

If you would like to become more involved with the Conservation Committee or any other aspect of chapter operations and activities please feel free to contact Carol Fiore, or me at 5mcorp@verinet.com or 970-493-7693. Individually, we will make progress VERY slowly. Working together, however, we will be able to progress more rapidly. I am excited at what an expanded Conservation Committee may be able to accomplish!

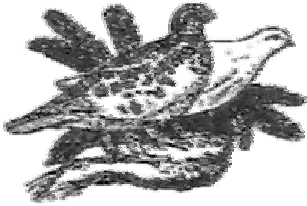
NATURAL AREA CLEANUP – MAY 22, 2004

We have scheduled a Natural Area Cleanup for Saturday, May 22, 2004. As you may already know, FCAS participates in the “Adopt A Natural Area” program of the Fort Collins Natural Resources Department (NRD). FCAS has “adopted” the Fossil Creek Marsh that lies between the railroad tracks and Timberline, south of Trilby and north of Carpenter Road. In addition, we have also done some work on the natural area on the west side of the railroad tracks and south of Trilby. We are still coordinating with NRD as to which particular parcel we will focus on.

As you may know, the Fort Collins system of natural areas was made possible by a citizens’ initiated sales tax which has allowed the acquisition and protection of about 10,000 acres of land in and around Fort Collins. This includes areas such as the Cathy Fromme Prairie and Coyote Ridge. However, the relatively few NRD field staff are barely able to keep up with maintenance demands, such as fencing, signage, and revegetation efforts. FCAS and other organizations have volunteered to help keep up with the never-ending task of removing trash, some left over from historical usage, but most resulting from the winds that blow trash around. If you would like to visit a natural area normally not open to the public and do a good deed please contact Bill Miller at 5mcorp@verinet.com or 970-493-7693 for further details.

Good Samaritan Ride Service For Program Meetings – Bill Miller

We have members who are not comfortable with driving themselves at night but would still enjoy attending our FCAS programs. If you would be willing to bring someone to our meetings who otherwise wouldn’t attend, or are someone who would appreciate a ride, please contact Bill Miller at 5mcorp@verinet.com or 970-493-7693. If you would like to coordinate this effort please let me know.



Fort Collins Audubon Society
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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

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The 2004 May Birdathon is Saturday May 15, 2004

Annual Spring Fundraiser for Fort Collins Audubon

The Birdathon happens in the 24-hour period beginning late Friday afternoon, May 14th through Saturday, May 15th. This time should be the peak of spring migration on the plains and the foothills.

Birdathon teams will be formed in early May and on Birdathon day team members will search for as many species as can be seen *or* heard in a 24-hour period. Expect at least 100 species with as many as 150 for the most skilled team--more than 250 species are possible.

Team members obtain pledges based on the total number of birds a team sees. Those who want to commit a pledge that are not on a team or associated with a team member may also pledge.

For more information, contact Phil Friedman, Birdathon Coordinator at 493-2959 or phifri@frii.com. You can visit www.fortnet.com/Audubon/birdathon.htm.

IMBD T-shirts and Posters!!!

In celebration of International Migratory Bird Day (Saturday, May 8th), Fort Collins Audubon will be offering IMBD T-shirts, posters, and migration maps. These will be available for sale at our program meeting in May.

The artwork is by this year's IMBD artist Ram Papish. Ram (pronounced Rom) now lives in Fort Collins. His beautiful and accurate wildlife paintings are wonderful. Ram will be signing his artwork at the May meeting, and will also autograph the T-shirts. Ram will give a presentation on colonial nesting birds for FCAS in the fall.

Annual Canoe Trip Coming Up In June!

June 11-13 (Friday - Sunday). Canoe Trip.

Join fellow nature lovers for a three-day canoeing excursion in June! Last year's trip on the Gunnison River was a great success. This year you will be paddling the most spectacular section of the White River. A twisting, 33-mile segment through White River Canyon includes several small rapids up to Class I (Beginner Level – easy!). With no sign of civilization along this section, except for the last few miles, the White River has been called the best canoeing water in Utah. Born in the Flattops Wilderness Area east of Meeker, CO, the river flows west into Utah, 40 miles south of Vernal, emptying into the Green River near Ouray. The lush river bottom provides food, water and shelter for beaver, wild horses, deer, golden eagles and Canada geese. Fossils and petrified wood can be found along the river. There are many arches, windows and odd-shaped pinnacles in the cliffs of the canyon. You will be able to stop and hike to “Goblin City” to see interesting rock formations and spectacular views. You can do another hike in the area called “Fantasy Canyon” or “Devils Playground” before or after your canoe trip. Joel Hurmence and Beth Dillon will be co-hosting this trip for FCAS. For a complete trip itinerary, map, personal gear needed, and lots of other information, visit www.fortnet.org/Audubon. **Centennial Canoe Outfitters** (www.centennialcanoe.com) will provide all safety equipment, river guides, canoes and great food. **Trip cost is \$285**, with \$50 donated back to FCAS. You will need a sleeping bag, tent and basic personal supplies. The trip is limited to 23 people, so sign up early. A deposit of \$100 per person must accompany your reservation request, and the **balance is due by May 21**. For further details and to register, contact Centennial Canoe Outfitters, 1-877-353-1850 (toll free) and refer to the Fort Collins Audubon trip.