

NOVEMBER 2004

# ptarmigan

Volume 36 Issue 3



**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.*

## Where Do Birds Fly? Why?? Ask the Pigeons!

How would one go about finding the answer to this great biological mystery - where do birds fly?...and why? Well, Hugh McIsaac has approached it by studying pigeon navigation. He is interested in the processes that enable pigeons to return home.

He is particularly interested in the mechanisms that pigeons use to determine their positions when homing from familiar areas. Pigeons released in a familiar area circle above the release site and then vanish from view in approximately the homeward direction; however, they rarely orient directly toward home. In addition, when Hugh McIsaac flies the same birds several times from a given location each bird is consistent in its homing orientation but homing orientations usually differ among birds.



This and further facts provide clues to pigeons' navigational processes, which Hugh McIsaac has incorporated into his hypotheses of pigeon navigation. Contrary to some other scientists' beliefs, Hugh's field studies suggest that pigeons use a modified form of triangulation to determine position. This hypothesis suggests that pigeons use landmarks to calculate their position relative to the home loft.

Join us at the November 14th Fort Collins Audubon Society meeting and explore these bird navigational mysteries with Hugh McIsaac.

Hugh McIsaac earned his undergraduate degree from Cornell University, and PhD from the University of Pittsburgh. Currently he is a senior lecturer at the University of Denver.

**THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAM — November 11, 2004**  
**Ludlow Room, Fort Collins Lincoln Center, 417 W. Magnolia Street**  
**Social Gathering - 7:00 PM, Program - 7:30 PM**



# NOV - DEC 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.fornet.org/Audubon> for more information. Contact the leader for the field trip in which you are interested or the Field Trips Coordinator, Gary Lefko, at 970-897-2454 or [lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org](mailto:lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org).

**11/4/2004 Thursday – Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Cole Wild at [birdingwild1@yahoo.com](mailto:birdingwild1@yahoo.com) or 970-310-3735. Fort Collin's newest natural area, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area, is projected to be open in 2006. Fort Collins Audubon performs a monthly bird census for the city. **Participation limited.**

**11/13/2004 Saturday – Birding for Beginners.** Leader: Beth Dillon at 970-490-2610. 8:30 - 11:00 a.m. **Limit 8 participants.**

**11/14/2004 Sunday - Fossil Creek Reservoir Bird Survey.** Leader: Nick Komar at [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net). Fort Collins Audubon performs a monthly bird census for the county. **Participation limited.**

**11/20/2004 Saturday - Fort Collins Waterfowl.** Leader Bill Miller at (970) 493-7693 or [5mcorp@verinet.com](mailto:5mcorp@verinet.com). Visit local ponds and lakes to look for waterfowl. 8:00 AM to Noon. **Participation limited.**

**11/21/2004 Sunday - Winter Raptors.** Leader: Phil Friedman at [phifri@frie.com](mailto:phifri@frie.com) or call 970-493-2959. 9:30-noon. Meet at the southwest side of the Harmony Library parking lot (Front Range campus at Harmony and Shields). Travel to city owned natural areas in search of wintering raptors. Begin with basic raptor identification/what birds are here this time of year, and then move to the viewing areas. Carpool to the areas; bring binoculars and spotting scope. **Limit 10 participants.**

**11/27/2004 Saturday - Fall Waterfowl.** Leader: Nick Komar at [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net). We'll visit northern Colorado waterfowl hotspots. **Participation limited.**

**11/28/2004 Sunday - "Where do I find birds in my town?".** Leader: Gary Lefko at [lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org](mailto:lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org) or call 970-897-2454. Meet 8:00AM 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: Loveland, CO.**

**12/4/2004 Saturday – Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Cole Wild at [birdingwild1@yahoo.com](mailto:birdingwild1@yahoo.com) or 970-310-3735. Fort Collin's newest natural area, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area, is projected to be open in 2006. Fort Collins Audubon performs a monthly bird census for the city. **Participation limited.**

**12/5/2004 Sunday - Fall Waterfowl.** Leader: Nick Komar at [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net). We'll visit northern Colorado waterfowl hotspots. **Participation limited.**

**12/11/2004 Saturday - Fort Collins Area.** Leaders: Gary Lefko at [lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org](mailto:lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org) or call 970-897-2454 and John Tumasonis at [j.electus@att.net](mailto:j.electus@att.net). Help us welcome the Boulder Audubon Society as we showcase "Fort Fun" birding. Meet 8:00 AM at Colorado Welcome Center parking lot.

## CONSERVATION CORNER—Carol Fiore, Chair

The next meeting of the Conservation Committee will be before the general meeting on November 11 at 6:00 p.m. We are working on some exiting issues, so feel free to join us.

Thank you to everyone who signed the Endangered Species Act Legacy Pledge. It has been mailed to the National Wildlife Federation.

The Conservation Committee has taken a stand in favor of reintroduction of wolves to control the elk population in Rocky Mountain National Forest, and we are continuing our investigation into the Roadless Rule as well as the Glade Reservoir Project. We've also been discussing the implications of wind power on birds and are doing further investigation.

We are always looking for concerned members who would like to get involved in letter writing campaigns. If you are interested, please send your email address to the Conservation Chair.

Also, if you have a suggestion for a name change for our organization, also forward that as well. The deadline is the December meeting.

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Bill Miller

### NEW MEMBERSHIP FORM IN PTARMIGAN:

On the back page of this November 2004 issue of the Ptarmigan you will find a revised membership application form which provides for three membership options.

- 1) The first option is for **NEW** memberships in **BOTH** the National Audubon Society (NAS) and the local chapter, the Fort Collins Audubon Society (FCAS). This is the same offer that currently exists for new members of NAS, under which the chapter receives back from NAS the member's first year's dues. The member would receive the AUDUBON magazine, published by NAS, as well as the chapter newsletter, the Ptarmigan.
- 2) The second option is for those **RENEWING** their memberships in **BOTH** NAS and FCAS. Once you are a member of NAS they will try to renew your membership directly. Because of changes in NAS' dues-sharing formula chapters currently receive a very small portion of your national dues, likely drop to nothing by next summer. Currently FCAS expends about \$7.00 annually to service each member with the Ptarmigan. This places a strain on chapter resources that could be used for other purposes. Thus we recommend that you renew your dues through FCAS in order to continue your subscription to the Ptarmigan. If you do not renew through FCAS we may not be able to continue your subscription to the Ptarmigan.
- 3) The third membership option is for those who wish to belong **ONLY** to the FCAS chapter. Such chapter members will **NOT** receive the AUDUBON magazine, nor will they be eligible to vote for members of the NAS Board of Directors. NAS has asked that chapters provide to them, at least once annually, the names and addresses of those belonging just to the chapters. There is a place on the new membership form for you to request that your name be shared with NAS. If you do not check this box we will assume that you do not wish your name be shared with NAS.

Two other items on the new membership application are requested by the chapter: members' telephone numbers and email addresses. There is about a three-week delay between the deadline for Ptarmigan submissions and when it is actually delivered to your doorstep. Thus, we are looking for ways to communicate in a more timely fashion with members when events or other activities become available AFTER it is too late to include them in the Ptarmigan.

One way to reduce the expenses of publishing and mailing the Ptarmigan is to make it available electronically. Currently we post the Ptarmigan on our web site, [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon). If you prefer, we could drop you from the mailing list of the Ptarmigan, but send you an email notifying you that the latest issue of the Ptarmigan is available on the web site. This would also place less demand on the environment by reducing the amount of paper used for printing as well as reducing the overall waste stream.

We look forward to serving you in a more timely fashion, but **only if** you provide the necessary contact information.

**NOMINATIONS:** Chapter elections will take place next January. The slate of candidates needs to be finalized by early November to be included in the December-January combined issue of the Ptarmigan. We are always looking for new volunteers to either serve on our committees or to stand for office. If you are interested in so serving please contact the chairman of the *Nominating Committee*, Phil Friedman, at [phifri@frii.com](mailto:phifri@frii.com) or at 493-2959. Others on the Nominating Committee are Bill Miller at [5mcorp@verinet.com](mailto:5mcorp@verinet.com) and Nick Komar at [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net).

**NATURAL AREA CLEANUP:** A cleanup of the city-owned natural area west of the railroad tracks on the south side of Trilby Road was a success, with nine people showing up. In addition to collecting wind-blown trash we also piled up old railroad ties and lumber from past agricultural use of the land. A grateful "thank you" is extended to Christina Andre, Dave Dubois, John Grant, Joel Hurmence, Paul Husted, Tom and Diann Johnston, Bill Miller, and Ellen Wride who, collectively, provided 25 person hours of voluntary labor to help clean up an eyesore and restore some habitat.

### OTHER EVENTS:

**DECEMBER POTLUCK AND SLIDE SHOW:** Don't forget to mark Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, on your calendar. That is when we will be holding our popular December program, which is actually provided by the members. We will begin setting up at 6:30 PM, with the show to begin at about 7:00 PM. Members of FCAS are invited to provide about 10-20 of their slides of birds, interesting trips, and so forth to show to others. Spare slide trays will be there for you to load your slides in, or you could bring your own slide tray that is compatible with a Kodak carousel projector. We will be meeting, again, at the Foothills Unitarian Church, 1815 Yorktown Ave, just north of W. Drake Road, between Shields Street and Taft Hill Road. Supper entrees and deserts are welcome. Silverware, dishes and drinks are available. Hope to see you all there.

### ANNUAL MEETING – January 13, 2005

We are looking for items for our upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> Silent Auction at the January Annual Meeting, Thursday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005. If you have items of reasonable quality that you would be willing to donate please contact Bill Miller at [5mcorp@verinet.com](mailto:5mcorp@verinet.com) or at (970) 493-7693.



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*lefkogt@greatpikespeakbirdingtrail.org*

**Birdathon:** Phil Friedman  
 970-493-2959  
*phifri@frii.com*

**Address Changes:** John Waddell  
 970-226-5917  
*jwaddell@lamar.colostate.edu*

**Audubon Society Membership Application**

Support FCAS by paying your National Audubon Society (NAS) and/or Chapter (FCAS) dues through your chapter:

? <b>New Member (NAS &amp; FCAS)</b>	<b>\$20</b>
(Receive <i>Audubon</i> magazine and <i>Ptarmigan</i> )	
? <b>Renewing Member (NAS &amp; FCAS)</b>	<b>\$35</b>
(Receive <i>Audubon</i> magazine and <i>Ptarmigan</i> )	
? <b>FCAS Chapter Member only</b>	<b>\$15</b>
(Receive <i>Ptarmigan</i> only)	
? <b>FCAS may share my name with NAS</b>	
? <b>Additional donation to FCAS of:</b>	\$ _____
<b>Total enclosed:</b>	\$ _____

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

? **I prefer to receive the Ptarmigan via the FCAS website, [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon). Please e-mail me when posted.**

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

**FCAS**  
**PO Box 271968**  
**Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968**

**FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**  
 Visit our website at [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon)