

# PTARMIGAN



FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 271968·Fort Collins,CO-80527-1968·[www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org)

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

September 2015

Volume 46, Issue 6

**Scott Rashid, Director**

**Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute**

**“Owls—Great Horned and Barn”**

**Thursday, Sept. 10 — Social Time: 7 p.m.; Program 7:30 p.m.**

**Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Drive**

Scott Rashid, director of The Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute (CARRI), will present the natural history of the Great Horned Owl from his firsthand accounts of this magnificent bird of prey. Along with the information about Great Horned Owls, Scott also will discuss research findings members of CARRI have documented through the use of live-camera systems placed both inside and outside of an active Barn Owl nest boxes. These cameras have enabled them to document activity of the Barn Owls that would otherwise not be accessible.

Scott has researched Great Horned Owls in Colorado since the late 1990s



**Scott Rashid with Great Horned Owl.**

and in Wisconsin before that. He has monitored many nesting pairs from egg laying through incubation and fledging of the young. In addition, he has documented behavior of the adults as they capture and deliver a large variety of prey to the nest and young. Scott also has rehabilitated a number of these owls, information available in his recently released second book, “The Great Horned Owl: An In-depth Study.” Copies of this book will be available for purchase at the program.

Join us on Sept. 10 to learn more about Great Horned and Barn Owls. This program is open to the public.

## **Welcome New National Members**

FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending complimentary copies of our newsletter for one month. We invite you to join us at our monthly programs on the second Thursday of the month to find out more about FCAS. National dues do not cover the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, so if you'd like to keep receiving the Ptarmigan after the complimentary issue, please support your local chapter and subscribe to the newsletter. See the details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at [www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org).

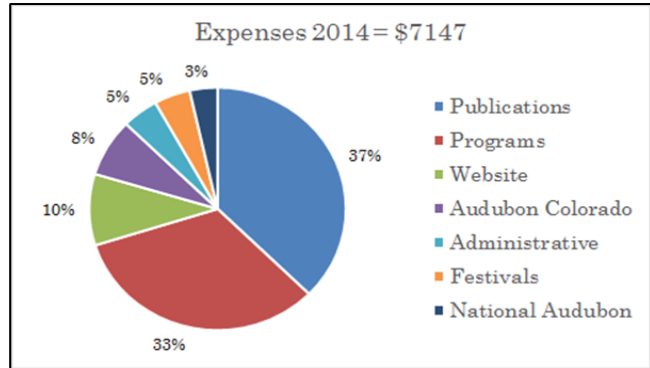
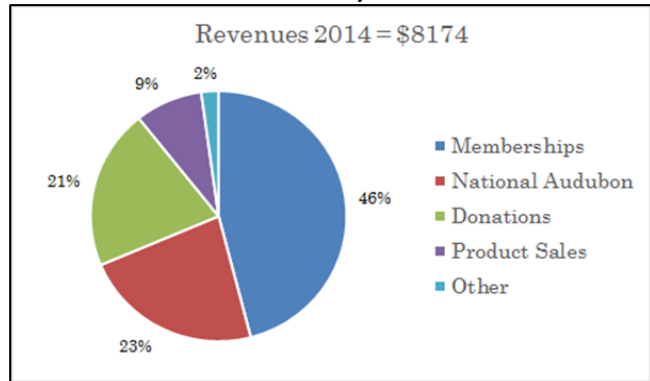
# President's Corner

by John Shenot

One of my goals as chapter president is to make the management of your chapter as transparent as is reasonably possible. In pursuit of that goal, this month I want to share a summary of how FCAS manages its finances. If any member wants more details than are provided in this article, please don't hesitate to ask.

FCAS is a very small non-profit organization run by volunteers. Our annual budget in recent years has been less than \$10,000. For example, in the "Revenues" chart, you can see a summary of our revenues for 2014. More than two-thirds came from the dues that FCAS members pay or the contributions that National Audubon Society (NAS) makes on behalf of NAS members that are served by our chapter. Add in donations from generous individuals, and you've accounted for 90 percent of our revenues. Most of the remainder came from sales of products like our pocket guide and checklists.

FCAS spends most of the money we receive to provide services that directly benefit our



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members. At the top of the list is our newsletter and other publications, followed by the monthly programs we offer, and our website. These three items accounted for 80 percent of our expenditures in 2014, as shown in the "Expenses" chart. Our chapter also spent a little more than 10 percent of our budget to support the statewide work of the Audubon Colorado Council, and the regional and national work of NAS. The remainder, roughly 10 percent, was spent on administrative costs (to keep the chapter functioning) and registration fees for local nature festivals in which we promoted our mission, recruited new members, and sold FCAS products.

The board is interested in having a third party audit our finances, just to make sure our accounting practices are reasonable. If any member has the requisite skills and would be willing to do a *pro bono* audit of FCAS, please contact a board member.

**Please note our new website address:**  
[www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org)



## September! Time to Think Backyard Conservation

It's September already—where did summer go? Although summer isn't officially over, it's time to start thinking about preparing yards and gardens for the winter ahead. On average, our first frost occurs between September 10 and 15, with our average hard freeze occurring in mid-October.

Winterizing gardens and yards not only makes them look better during the cold winter months; it also makes gardens easier to work next spring. As you make your to-do list of chores, take a look around and re-view what did and didn't work this past growing season. Fall

is a great time to move or remove plants as well as plant bulbs (for spring color) and trees and shrubs. It's also the perfect time to divide established, spring-blooming plants such as salvia, day lilies, or bee balm, which you can use to fill bare spots or share with neighbors and friends. Want fall color? Plant asters, mums and pansies—many nurseries and public gardens have end-of-season plant sales. Shop wisely to make sure your new bargains will work in your space and soil conditions.

Harvest fruits and vegetables as they ripen. Apples and pears can take a light frost, but peaches, berries and grapes need to be gathered before frost, as do tomatoes. If you have tomatoes that are green and frost is predicted, pull up the entire plant and hang it upside down in a cool, dry place. The tomatoes will continue to ripen. Consider freezing or preserving your bounty for later, or donate extra fruits and veggies to the local food bank or share with friends.

As you go about weeding and cleaning up your yard and gardens, check for diseased plants. Cuttings, dried leaves and healthy plant foliage can go into a compost bin, but don't place weeds or unhealthy plants in the bin as this will cause problems down the road. And if you don't have a compost bin, consider getting one. Composting is

a great way to add nutrients to your gardens and give your plants a growth boost. It's free and good for the environment.

Be sure to continue watering in the fall. The Colorado State University Extension Office suggests watering trees, shrubs, lawns,



Mulch by [denverpost.com](http://denverpost.com)

and perennials during dry periods to prevent root damage, which affects the health of the entire plant. For a complete list of watering tips, see <http://ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/07211.html>.

Mulching plants can help protect them from extreme temperature changes and soil erosion as well as improving water retention and reducing weeding. Be sure not to over-mulch as it can lead to root rot and may encourage disease problems and pests.

To cut or not cut back: Many experts recommend leaving healthy foliage uncut to help protect newer plantings. If the plants are native perennials, leaving them uncut offers shelter and forage for native wildlife. Overwintering birds rely on dried seed heads, fruits and berries and use plant stubs and ground covers for protection.

With a bit of effort, backyard conservation benefits all!



### Seeing What is There, Not What You Want to See

Birding is an activity that challenges the mind as well as the eyes. The brain's responsibility is to complete the picture of what we think we see and make it what is known. Keeping our minds open to what is there, not what we think we see is the challenge. So when you look for a bird on a wire, how does it look? Perpendicular, right? Well, depending on the bird, yes and no.

I am writing now about the Common Nighthawk. Family: *Caprimulgidae*; Order: *Caprimulgiformes*. Joining the Common Nighthawk in its family are the Poor-will's-widow and the Whip-poor-will. These birds often are referred to as goatsuckers or nightjars, references to myths about the bird sucking a goat's milk. The word nightjar refers to the European bird that belongs to the same family.

Geographically widespread, the Common Nighthawk nests over all of North America, migrates through Central America, and winters over most of South America. Although widespread and common, it remains poorly understood.



Common Nighthawks

mouth, it feeds on the wing in swarms of insects. Using a looping flight pattern, it circles round and round scooping up insects.

In addition to its distinctive flight pattern, it has long pointed wings in relation to its body



Common Nighthawk near Pawnee Buttes by Scott Cobble.

The Common Nighthawk is crepuscular, meaning it is most active feeding at dawn and dusk. With its tiny beak and wide

size with clear wide white strips on the underside of each wing. The flight pattern and the wing shape with white stripes make a clear identification of Common Nighthawk.

Spending its days resting or sleeping on tree limbs, fence wires, and posts, it's important that you look with an eye for its behavior, not what you expect. This bird straddles a tree limb or a wire parallel to the perch material making it difficult to spot. But, if you are lucky enough to find it on a fence post, you can view it eyeball to eyeball. They remain perfectly still and a very clear photo can be taken very close.

Nesting is not a big task for this bird as it nests on the ground. All this said, although it is common, not hard to identify, has widespread territory, and is an insect eater, for unknown reasons, Canada has recorded a 50 percent decline in its population. Insecticide killing of insects and habitat destruction are some of the possible reasons.

The Common Nighthawk offers us a lovely evening of watching bird behavior and enjoying its dietary habit of eating insects. A beautiful sunset, nighthawks swooping overhead, and no mosquitoes! Can you ask for anything more?



## Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free of charge (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Visit [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon) for more information and updates. RSVP is recommended.

### Sept. 12, Saturday, Timnath Reservoir.

Leader: Nick Komar, [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net), 970-449-3645. Over 200 bird species have been observed at Timnath Reservoir, including sev-



Yellow-breasted Chat at Dixon Reservoir  
by John Shenot.

eral that have only been recorded at a few other locations in Northern Colorado. Last September, birders observed Larimer County's first Parasitic Jaeger here. Join Nick Komar for a half day looking for resident and migrating waterfowl and wading birds, migrating shorebirds, gulls and terns, and more. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking area of the Timnath town park on the southwest side of the reservoir. The entrance to the park is an unpaved driveway on Larimer County Road 40 (also called Buss Grove Road). Note: On some days at this reservoir, most birds only can be seen at long distances. Bring a spotting scope and a folding chair if you have those, as well as sunblock, insect repellent, and water. A portable toilet is on site, but no other amenities.

**Sept. 13, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com), work: 970-669-1185, home: 970-669-8095. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the City of Fort Collins. All levels are welcome. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot. Call for any change.

**Sept. 19, Saturday, Dixon Reservoir/Pineridge Natural Area.** Leader: Sirena Brownlee, [warblerak@yahoo.com](mailto:warblerak@yahoo.com), 970-980-6184. This local gem is a great spot for resident and

migrating waterfowl and migrating warblers and other songbirds. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the parking area off Larimer County Road 42C just past Hughes Stadium at the Pineridge/Maxwell Natural area on the north side of CR 42C (not the Dixon Reservoir parking area on the top of the hill). We will walk the trail around Dixon Reservoir and up along the Timber Trail for a walk of about 2.5 miles. There is a restroom at the Dixon Reservoir parking area, but no other facilities. A spotting scope would be helpful to see birds on the reservoir but not required. Bring water and sunscreen.

**Sept. 30, Wednesday, Wyoming Hereford Ranch.** Leader: Irene Fortune, [irene\\_fortune@msn.com](mailto:irene_fortune@msn.com), 970-613-0966. This ranch, located on the outskirts of Cheyenne, is a favorite destination among Cheyenne-area birders and an Audubon-designated "Important Bird Area." It offers a variety of habitats that can attract fall migrants. In addition to the ranch,



Pareiasaurus (or perhaps just a  
common Snapping Turtle) by John Shenot.

there are two reservoirs nearby and the possibility of checking out grasslands along Chalk Bluffs Road on the way home. The field trip will leave from a Fort Collins rendezvous point at 6 a.m. Contact Irene for details.

**Future Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Surveys:** See description and contact details above for this recurring, monthly survey. Dates and times for future surveys are as follows: Oct. 11, Sunday, 7 a.m.; Nov. 8, Sunday, 7:30 a.m.; Dec. 13, Sunday, 8 a.m.



## Brazilian Birding Tour December 6-17, 2015

There are only two spots left to discover the birds of Southeast Brazil's Atlantic Rainforest in a tour sponsored by Quetzal Tours and led by Giuliano Gernardon, a long-time birding and photography guide. You'll stay in the Guapi-Açu



Red and Green Macaws by Bradley Davis.

Bird Lodge that is located atop a small hill overlooking a fabulous wetland in the Guapi-Açu Ecological Reserve (REGUA), an important 19,000-acre reserve in the Atlantic lowlands of the state of Rio de Janeiro. REGUA is a non-

profit organization working to protect and restore habitat by planting thousands of native trees, purchasing forested land to expand the reserve, training and employing locals as forest rangers and birding guides, and hosting environmental education programs for local schoolchildren.

Brazil's Atlantic rainforest is full of colorful birds, including remarkable tanagers, hummingbirds, and parrots. Fruit and hummingbird feeders at the lodge and elsewhere will keep photographers busy. The wetland area at REGUA also should afford some good photo opportunities. One can expect to see more than 300 species during the tour, including 60-plus Atlantic rainforest endemics. A list of expected species is available upon request.

You are likely to catch a glimpse of Spot-billed Toucanets, Crescent-chested Puffbirds, Brazilian Ruby Hummingbirds, the handsome Shrike-like Cotinga, the endangered endemic Three-toed Jacamar, the spectacular Plovercrest, and much more.

The cost of \$4,800, per person, double-occupancy (single supplement \$400), includes lodging, meals, in-country transportation, and entrance fees. A portion of the fee is donated to FCAS.

Contact Nick Komar to sign up or for more information: [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net).



Brazilian Ruby by Bradley David.

### FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

Wild Birds Unlimited  
3636 S. College Ave  
Ste. C  
(970) 225-2557

Jax Mercantile  
950 E. Eisenhower  
Loveland  
(970) 776-4540

Jax Outdoor Gear  
1200 N. College  
(970) 221-0544

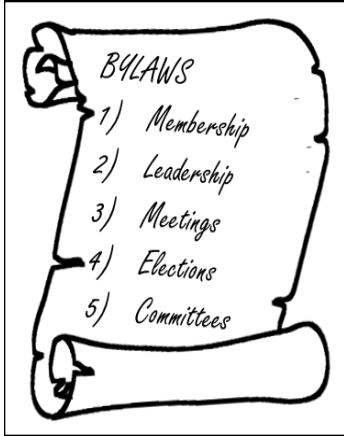
Jax Farm & Ranch  
1000 N. Hwy. 287  
(970) 481-2221



# Proposed FCAS Chapter Bylaws Change

by Bill Miller, Director-at-Large

It is a rare occasion when a change to the chapter bylaws is proposed. Changes may be legally necessary, but generally, as in this case, are proposed to facilitate chapter operations.



The control and conduct of business of the FCAS is vested in its board of directors. The board determines the policies of the chapter. Our bylaws currently define the board as consisting of : (1) Four or five elected officers, (2) not more than six elected directors at large, (3) appointed chairs of nine standing committees (conservation, membership, education, finance, program, field trips, publications, public relations, and hospitality, (4) appointed chairs of special committees at the discretion of the board, and (5) the immediate past-president if s/he does not already hold one of the positions in (1) through (4) above. All positions have a term of one year, with the exception of the president whose term is two years. A president-elect would be the fifth officer during the second year of a president’s two-year term.

Candidates for these positions are identified by a nominating committee. The board appoints a nominating committee with three or more members prior to the October program meeting. The nominating committee nominates candidates for elected positions that are coming open and assists in identifying members to be appointed as committee chairs.

Over the past decade or so we have experienced an increasing reluctance among chapter members to volunteer to take on leadership roles as

elected or appointed members of the board. Our bylaws allow up to 25 persons on the board, but we currently have only 10 members participating. The implications of this low number of board members is that some functions of the board are not being fulfilled and/or that some board members are trying to fill two (or more) board roles, often with varying degrees of efficiency.

A problem that has become more apparent in the past two years is that, on at least two occasions, we have not had the required quorum of six board members at our board meetings, which prohibited business from being accomplished.

Currently Article III, Section 5 of the chapter bylaws defines a quorum for board meetings as: “A quorum for meetings of the board shall include at least two elected officers, one of which is the president or the vice-president, and at least four other board members.”

The board proposes that this be changed to: “A quorum for meetings of the Board shall include at least two elected officers, one of which is the president or the vice-president, and at least three other board members.”

A vote to accept or reject this proposed change will be conducted at the beginning of the October program meeting on Thursday, Oct. 8.

FCAS board members sincerely wish that you will consider standing for one of the elected or appointed board positions to bring new ideas to the board and help spread the duties over more people.



**FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members**

Shelley Bayard de Volo	Rosemary B. Lucas	Gregg Somermeyer
Jon Kindschy	Susan Peterson	Daniel R. Voss
Tom & Peg La Point	Holmes Rolston III	

Thank you for your membership. Your support makes our programs and conservation efforts possible and helps us achieve our mission of connecting people to the natural world.



Fort Collins Audubon Society  
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### Membership Application

Join Fort Collins Audubon Society (FCAS), National Audubon Society (NSA), or both.

- New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member \$ 20 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Receive the FCAS *Ptarmigan* by email
- New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member \$ 30 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Receive the FCAS *Ptarmigan* by mail
- Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member \$750 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Receive FCAS *Ptarmigan* by mail or email
- Additional support for FCAS programs \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- Additional support for Alex Cringan Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
(natural history education grants)
- New NAS member \$ 20 May we send you FCAS email alerts if updates occur for field  
Receive the NAS *Audubon* by mail trips, programs, etc.? Yes or No
- Renewing NAS member \$ 35 May we contact you for volunteer activities such as helping at  
Receive the NAS *Audubon* by mail events or contacting legislators on important issues? Yes or No

**Total Enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your tax-exempt check payable to FCAS and mail with this form to FCAS,  
P.O. Box 271968, Fort Collins, CO, 80527-1968. Your cancelled check is your receipt. All renewals are due in  
January. New memberships begun after August 31 extend throughout the following year. Applications can be  
completed at [www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org).