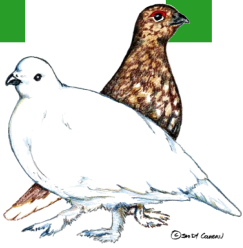


PTARMIGAN



FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 271968 • Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968 • www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

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

February 2018

Volume 49, Issue 2

FCAS Hosts

Nate Boschmann, Stewardship Manager

Wildlands Restoration Volunteers

“Healing the Land through Habitat Restoration and Community Caring”

Thursday, Feb. 8

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

Social Time: 7 p.m.; Program 7:20 p.m.

Join Wildlands Restoration Volunteers (WRV) for a presentation and discussion on the science of restoration, covering basic principles and how they are applied on local projects in Larimer County. Specific techniques used in riparian and upland habitat restoration will be covered, such as using ecotypic plant materials, erosion control, induced meandering, and sustainable trail development. Projects in Larimer County will be highlighted while discussing the importance and benefits of engaging citizens in stewardship of local habitats and trails. WRV is a 501c3 nonprofit rooted in Boulder and Fort Collins, whose mission is to heal the land and build community.

Nate Boschmann, Trails and Stewardship Program Manager in WRV's Fort Collins office, will present. He recruits and trains volunteers, coordinates restorative projects, and tries to convince people that stacking



Before and after restoration project.
Photo courtesy of Wildlands Restoration Volunteers.

large rocks is as much fun as he thinks it is. Nate's first foray into the restorative world was participating in a tall grass prairie restoration in his hometown in Kansas when he was 14. After a few misguided attempts at profitable careers, he came to his true place in the world of experiential education, ecology, and restoration. Since moving to Colorado, Nate's been a ski bum, worked with at-risk

youth, facilitated wilderness therapy, led Youth Conservation Corps, and studied rangeland ecology and restoration at CSU. He's currently serving on the Pawnee Byways Committee and on the board of the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed.

Join us on Feb. 8 at the Fort Collins Senior Center. The public is welcomed at this free program.

President's Corner

by John Shenot

At the FCAS annual meeting on January 11, the membership elected a slate of officers and directors-at-large to one year terms. (I will be serving the second year of my two-year term as President, so that office was not up for election this year.) Following the election, and with the approval of the newly elected Board of Directors, I appointed several people to chair some of our standing committees. I'm delighted that the following volunteers will join me in leading FCAS throughout 2018: President-elect, vacant; Vice President, Liz Pruessner; Treasurer, Joe Polazzi; Secretary, vacant; At-large Directors, Scott Cobble, Alan Godwin, Ron Harden, Bill Miller, Harry Rose, Helmut Retzer; Conservation, Bill Miller; Membership, vacant; Education, Barb Patterson; Finance, vacant; Program, Jessie Meschievitz; Field Trips, Sirena Brownlee; Publications, vacant; Public Relations, vacant; Hospitality, Chandrie Davis; Audubon Colorado Council Delegate, Bill Miller.

We still have a few vacancies to fill. Please contact me if you have interest in volunteering. You can also contact me or the listed chairperson if you would like to serve on one of our committees.

FCAS—and I mean all of us—are indebted to two outstanding volunteers who stepped down from service on our board in January. Hildy Morgan spearheaded our hugely successful silent auction in 2017, which enabled us to balance the books without raising membership dues. And John Waddell completed a stint of many years serving as FCAS Treasurer. If you see Hildy or John, thank them!

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www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety>



WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

FCAS Membership Renewal Reminder

The 2018 annual membership renewal drive is still in full swing! FCAS chapter memberships run for the calendar year from January–December. Please renew today if you have not already done so. You can take care of it right now by renewing online at <http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org> or via U.S. mail using the form on the back of the *Ptarmigan*.

Thank you to all the members who have renewed! And thanks for supporting our mission of conservation, education, stewardship, and habitat restoration, focusing on birds and other wildlife.



From <http://springcreekprairie.audubon.org>

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days between Feb. 16–19 and report their sightings online at birdcount.org. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world.



“All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.” –*Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)*

“Blind respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth.” –*Albert Einstein*

“I have absolutely no idea what my generation did to enrich our democracy. We dropped the ball. We entered a period of complacency and closed our eyes to the public corruption of our democracy.” –*Wynton Marsalis*

Ah-h-h-h! So much to write about; so little time to research and produce an article. Even more limiting—so little print space to provide any in-depth writing. There definitely are a lot of topic areas that deserve further exploration, especially now that the current national political administration has been in place for about a year.

In December, I belatedly wrote about how five people representing the Deep Green Resistance environmental organization initiated a suit on behalf of the Colorado River ecosystem against the State of Colorado in U.S. District Court in Denver. In an article written by Will Falk, the suit was described as requesting that the Court recognize the river’s Rights of Nature (RoN) that would allow the river “...the rights to exist, flourish, regenerate, and naturally evolve.” To enforce those rights, the Colorado River also was requesting that it be granted “personhood,” as well as the standing to sue in American courts.

Unfortunately, the suit was dismissed after the lawyer presenting the case (Jason Flores-Williams) was



Federal Building, Denver.
Photo by Deanna Meyer.

threatened with sanctions by the court for the unforgivable act of requesting rights for nature. The possible sanctions that could have been brought against Flores-Williams went as far as disbarment. Flores-Williams actually was placed in the situation in which he had to request that his own case be withdrawn.

Once more, it has been shown that the American legal system and its government, designed to favor corporations, has shown that nature is property to be destroyed for profit. And, because corporations control most of the world’s wealth, they have the most power to purchase non-human communities and ecosystems, and convert them into dead, human products. The Colorado River ecosystem will continue to be plundered in the name of profit until, sometime in the future, it will be realized that hu-

mans, with all of their engineering ability to manipulate natural systems, are not omnipotent after all, and nature will take her revenge—probably in the form of unstoppable global climate disruption.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Susan Barbour
Robert Beauchamp
Carol Bergersen
Denise Bretting
Rose Brinks
Linda A. Cashman
George Chimonas
Chandriee & James Davis
Susan Degutz
Barbara Denny
Beth Dillon
Karen & Steve Dornseif
Georgia Doyle
Elizabeth Edwards
Jane Fine
Willard Flowers

Mary Gish
Alan Godwin
Larry Griffin
Carole Hossan
Cynthia Jacobson
Janice Johnson
Joyce Jones
Carol Jones
Jon Kindschy
Elena Klaver
Mike Knowles & Michelle Haeefe
Charles Kopp
Dianne Kristoff
Dave Landers
Jane Low
Rosemary Lucas

Lois Mahoney
Karen Manci
Jessie Meschievitz
Dr. Paul A. Opler
Barbara Patterson
Joe & Chris Polazzi
Susan Quinlan
Rich Roberts
Harry Rose
John Shenot
Darwin Spearing
Doug Swartz
H. Bruce Vigneault
David Wade
Diana Wess
Roger Wieck



Harris's Hawk on Holiday

A Harris's Hawk (HH) made a visit to Fort Collins last December, both exciting and delighting birders from Larimer County and afar. Local birder extraordinaire, Nick Komar, said: "The Harris's Hawk set up a territory about three square miles in size that stretched from Arapaho Bend Natural Area in the south to Riverbend Ponds Natural Area in the north. It was shy of people, but birders kept a healthy distance. The heavy monitoring by birders during the month of December allowed us to learn its habits and favorite roost trees. In January, it became much harder to locate. I suspect this was due to pressure from other raptors that arrived in the territory, including a couple of Rough-legged Hawks and a rare Peregrine Falcon. On several occasions, birders witnessed the Harris's Hawk being harassed by Red-tailed Hawks."

Why was a sighting of the HH so significant? The HH was far from its normal haunts. The HH's locale ranges from southern Arizona, southern Texas, Central America, and portions of South America. Its typical habitats are subtropics, savanna, semi-arid woodland, and semi-desert.

The visitation was ultra-unusual because the HH was alone. Nicknamed Wolves of the Sky, the gregarious HHs, unlike other raptors, live in groups, usually a family group, of five or more individuals. Often a female mates with two males

who help with raising the young. The group hunts cooperatively by relay-chasing the prey until it takes cover in brush or a thicket, whereupon a HH flushes the prey out of hiding. Upon hearing a call from a lookout HH, one or two waiting HHs will swoop down to make the kill. The meal is shared. Typical prey are small mammals, reptiles, and birds. HH's are very popular with falconers due to their willingness and powerful hunting skills.

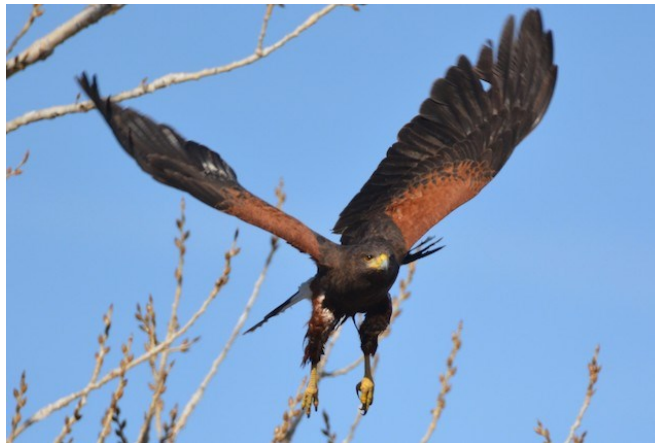
The HH was named by the artist John James Audubon for his friend, fellow ornithologist Edward Harris, who often bought Audubon's art when Audubon needed funds. Audubon thanked Edward by naming the handsome dark brown bird with chestnut colored shoulders and leg feathers, HH, and the Harris's Sparrow after his benefactor.

I had a brief look at the HH silhouetted in a faraway tall tree. Happily, a chance saunter past the HawkQuest booth at the National Western Stock Show gave me a very close view of a male HH on a handler's glove. The handler told me about a unique behavior of the HH: "stacking" or "back-standing," in which one HH stands upon the back of another HH who is standing upon the dominant HH, which is perching upon a barrel cactus or short tree, giving

the top hawk a greater vista to scan for enemies or prey. Cool!



Harris's Hawk with full crop
by Robert Beauchamp.



Frontal flying Harris's Hawk by David Wade.

FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending one complimentary copy of our newsletter. 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 to keep receiving it, please support your local chapter and subscribe. See details on the last page or at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

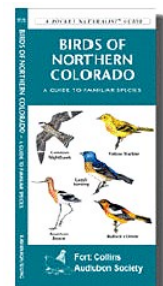
Available at:

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



Local Christmas Bird Counts Were a Huge Success ————— by John Shenot

FCAS helped promote three local Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) this year. The Fort Collins CBC, on December 16, reported 100 species for only the second time in its long history. Due to warm fall temperatures, there was more open water than usual and this led to unusually high numbers for Ring-necked Duck, Redhead, Hooded Merganser, Lesser Scaup, and Ring-billed Gull. Numbers were also high for Black-capped Chickadee, Mountain Chickadee, Wild Turkey, Common Raven, and White-breasted Nuthatch. Numbers were unusually low for Mourning Doves. The biggest surprises may have been a Gray Catbird, a Lincoln's Sparrow, four Harris' Sparrows (a singing), Winter Wren, and the first Palm Warbler ever recorded on a Fort Collins CBC.

The Loveland CBC reported 109 species, a new record for that CBC, with an additional nine species recorded during Count Week so far. Four species were seen for



Northern Pygmy Owl by Morris Clark.

the first time on any Loveland CBC: Red-necked Grebe (in two locations!), Glaucous-winged Gull, Dunlin, and Three-toed Woodpecker. A few other rare species were seen that only had been recorded once before on a Loveland CBC: Snow Bunting, Pine Warbler, and Lincoln's Sparrow. Unusually high numbers of Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, American Coot, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, White-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned

Kinglet, and Red-winged Blackbird also were observed. Additional rare species observed during count week included American Woodcock, Black-legged Kittiwake, Snowy Owl, and Curve-billed Thrasher.

Details for the Rawhide Power Plant CBC, held on December 30, were not available at press time. Our thanks go to the CBC coordinators: Tom Hall (Fort Collins), Doug Kibbe (Rawhide), and Nick Komar (Loveland).

Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Contact the listed trip leader or FCAS Field Trip Chairperson (Sirena Brownlee, sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com) prior to the day of the trip or visit fortcollinsaudubon.org for more information and updates. Please RSVP.

Feb. 11, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com, work: 970-669-1185, home: 970-669-8095. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the City of Fort Collins on the second Sunday of each month. All levels are welcome. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot. Call for any change. Dates and times for future surveys are: March 11, 7:30 a.m.; April 8, 7 a.m.; and May 13, 6:30 a.m.

Feb. 24, Saturday, Running Deer and Cottonwood Hollow Natural Areas. Leader: Sirena Brownlee, sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com, 970-980-6184. Meet at 10 a.m. in the Running Deer parking lot on the south side of E. Prospect Road for a 2–3 mile walk around the natural area. More than 200 bird species have been seen at this location, making it one of the top hotspots in the county.



Palm Warbler above by Nick Komar, and below by Austin Hess.



Fort Collins Audubon Society
PO Box 271968
Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968



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Membership Application

Join Fort Collins Audubon Society (FCAS), National Audubon Society (NAS), 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.