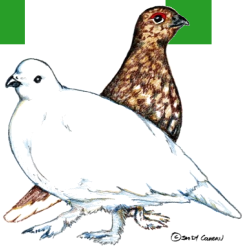


PTARMIGAN



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.

November 2018

Volume 49, Issue 8

FCAS Hosts

Dr. Barry Noon, Emeritus Professor, Colorado State University

Presenting

“Sharing the Landscape With Dangerous Animals—Tiger Conservation in India”

Thursday, November 8

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

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

Across all nations and all environments—marine, freshwater, arctic, temperate, and tropical—large-bodied animals continue to experience significant declines in distribution and abundance. Tigers, which number less than 4,000 individuals and occupy only seven percent of their historic range, are no exception to this rule. The largest number of tigers occurs in India, a country with over 1.3 billion people and one-third the land area of continental United States. How is it that tigers precariously persist in India, but large bodied predator populations in the United States, with far fewer people and much greater land area, continue to be imperiled? Dr. Noon will discuss research findings of his Indian students studying tigers, their implications



Tiger photo by Barry Noon.

for their long-term conservation, and contrast these with efforts to encourage public support to reintroduce gray wolves to western landscapes in the United States.

Barry R. Noon is an Emeritus Professor in the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology at Colorado State University. In collaboration with his students, his current research focuses on tiger conservation in India, the effects of energy development on imperiled species in the United

States, climate change effects on wetland birds, and promoting biodiversity conservation on U.S. federal lands.

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

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 subscribe. See the details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.

As I near the end of my second term as president, I'm happy to report that I haven't ruined the organization. All kidding aside, I recently compared the most recent report from our treasurer to the report from January 2015, when I first took office, and found that our bank balance has changed by less than one percent. We haven't grown, as I would have liked, but your elected Board of Directors has managed to keep our finances stable without raising membership dues. In fact, FCAS has not raised membership dues since 2010.

In next month's newsletter I will present our budget for 2019, but here's a sneak preview: we will start the year with known expenses that exceed the revenues we collect from membership dues. This happens every year. But instead of raising dues, we try each year to have one major fundraiser that fills the gap. We've had great success in the past two years with a birdathon (2016) and a silent auction (2017) that exceeded our goals, but we've also learned that those kinds of fundraisers are more effective if we don't repeat them every year. So, for 2018, we'll be trying a more direct approach.

Before the end of the year, FCAS will mail a letter to our members asking for donations to supplement membership dues. We've never done this before, but you all know that many other non-profits do this annually or even more frequently. Our needs are modest: a donation of \$50 could pay our registration fees for having an FCAS table at an upcoming nature festival, \$100 could cover most of our costs for one issue of the



Ptarmigan, or \$250 could pay for one of our monthly meetings. We're also trying to build up funds in the Alex Cringan Fund, so we can offer natural history education grants to local teachers and students. I hope our letter will get your attention and that you will consider giving. Thanks!



White-tailed Deer at North Shields Pond Natural Area
by John Shenot.

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Visit us on Facebook:

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

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



Amendment 74 Could End Colorado's Environmental Regulations

If you value your health, birds, and the environment, vote against it.

What if environmental regulations ceased to exist in Colorado? Development restrictions to protect Important Bird Areas—gone. Required buffer zones for wildlife migration—gone. Regulations on industrial discharges to streams? Mining reclamation standards?

Scrubbers on smokestacks to protect your air? Gone, gone, gone.

If Amendment 74 (A74) passes this November, all this and more could happen. In essence, A74 would require Coloradans to pay industry not to pollute their environment and poison their families. Here's how it would work:

A74 would require governments to compensate property owners for any reduction in property value as a result of a government regulation. Since no level of government in Colorado operates at a surplus, the only option would be to eliminate regulations. Proponents claim that the measures protect private property rights, but in reality they elevate commercial property owners over all others.

A74 isn't specific to the environment; it targets all regulations that cost money to comply. Restaurant health regulations cost money, so those also would be eliminated. Zoning regulations—like prohibiting adult bookshops next to schools—also would be off the table.

One important caveat is that the requirement for compensation only applies to the

property owner seeking to avoid regulation. Suppose you're a surface owner of a split estate and the mineral rights owner wants to drill in your front yard. Could you claim compensation if your property value plummeted as a result? No, because your loss in value would

not be due to a regulation. Good news though: you could operate a landfill in your backyard!

Last, the amendment only applies to private owners and increases costs to the public. Governments would still need to meet regulations and could face significantly higher costs to do so. For example, federal water standards would still apply to

public water providers, so the city of Fort Col-

lins and others would still need to provide safe drinking water. The water flowing into their facilities, however, would be significantly more polluted as a result of non-existent regulations on upstream industries. It's pretty

easy to guess who would have to pay the increased treatment costs: you.

Given the extreme threat to public health, the environment, and the quality of life in Colorado, A74 is the most dangerous issue to appear on the ballot in over 20 years. If you care about birds, wildlife, or your health, vote no on A74 and tell your friends to do the same.



If you value Colorado's environment, vote against Amendment 74.
Photo by Evan Barrientos of Audubon Rockies.



Photo: Antti T. Nissinen/Flickr (CC BY 2.0).

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Scott Cobble; Glenn Elmore; Jane Michalski; Lawrence Sherman

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.



Birds Play an Important Role in Ecosystems

"We admire birds for their beauty, songs, and the grace of their near miraculous ability to fly, but are birds important to the ecosystem?" asks The Institute for Bird Populations (<http://birdpop.org/pages/whyStudyBirds.php>). The term for the direct and indirect contribution to the environment, and the ways that birds support and improve human life, is ecosystem services. We already know that birds are important to humans and the ecosystem, but we want other people to know.

As members of ecosystems, birds play many roles, including predator, pollinator, scavenger, seed disperser, seed predators, and ecosystem engineers. Birds contribute four types of services recognized in 2005 by the U.N. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: supporting, regulating, provisioning, and cultural.

Action within the category of supporting services is thought of as the foundation of all other processes, such as nutrient cycling and the formation of soil. Birds such as oystercatchers, curlews, and plovers prey on the snails in saltwater marshes, preventing the overgrazing of cordgrass, and protecting valuable wetlands.

Regulating services include benefits from the regulation of ecosystem processes, such as carbon sequestration, waste decomposition, and air purification. Birds are important scavengers in many ecosystems, removing the carcasses of dead animals, reducing the spread of diseases, and recycling nutrients. A study of vultures that were fed disease-causing organisms found that most bacteria were killed in the vultures' highly acidic stomachs.

Provisioning services include products that we harvest from ecosystems and include the positive

impact birds have on crops and livestock. The construction of nest boxes for Great Tits in apple orchards has led to greater numbers of birds in the area. The birds forage on caterpillars that damage crops, reducing crop damage and increasing yields. This also can lead to reducing the need for pesticides and other chemicals.

The last category, cultural services, includes bird watching, which fosters ecotourism and provides a source of income. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2016, 45 million people watched birds and contributed \$80 million to the U.S. economy. Nature centers that offer bird programs and educate children foster an appreciation of nature and provide spiritual enrichment.

According to a paper for the National Center for Biotechnology Information by C.J. Whelan, D.G. Wenny, and R.J. Marquis, birds have characteristics that make them unique from the perspective of ecosystem services. Because most birds fly and have high metabolic rates, they can respond to irruptive or pulsed resources better than other vertebrates. Their mobility allows them to leave areas in which resources are no longer sufficient. Migratory species link ecosystem processes and fluxes that are separated by great distances and times. And

differences in birds' social structure throughout the year can lead to changes in the avian impact on the environment.

But we already know that. Please consider volunteering with outreach and education for FCAS so we can teach others the importance of the conservation of birds and our environment.



American Oystercatcher by Robert Blanchard.



Turkey Vulture by Nick Komar.



An Update from the Education Committee

By Barbara Patterson

We have had a busy season sharing our love of birds at education and outreach events. This spring we received a collaborative grant and were able to update our education materials. We have a new display board, signage, a vertical banner, and binoculars and field



Photo by Philip Brown.

guides for programming. We co-sponsored presentations and hikes on nesting, native plants, and migration with Lory State Park celebrating the “Year of the Bird,” and just

completed a beginning birding program in September. We participated in two festivals: the Poudre River Fest and the Pleasant Valley Rendezvous that included a very popular Golden Eagle nest watch at Watson Lake. Members taught at Old Town Library, a Montessori school, and gave a presentation to the Sierra Club. We partnered on a second grant sponsored by Excel Energy with Audubon Rockies and the City of Fort Collins, and planted a wildlife habitat on the back patio of the senior center. We have started to offer a series of bird classes in the *Recreator* and will begin birding hikes this spring. Another partnership included the vet-tech students at Front Range Community college in a campaign to leave cats inside homes.

We already have requests for the new year, but we can't do this without some help! I will be sending an email to you if you are already on the volunteer list and ask you to please “opt-in” to receive a few emails inviting you to participate in our events. I also will have a sign-up at the program meetings. Thank you to all the FCAS members, Lory State Park, students, and other volunteers that helped with these programs, and to the National Audubon Society, Audubon Rockies, the City of Fort Collins, and Excel Energy for their support.



Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Inquire with the FCAS field trip coordinator (Sirena Brownlee) or the trip leader named below to borrow binoculars. Please understand that changes to the dates, meeting times or locations, and trip leaders are occasionally unavoidable. Contact the listed trip leader prior to the day of the trip or visit fortcollinsaudubon.org for more information and updates. RSVP strongly encouraged.

Sunday, Nov. 11, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com, 970-669-1185 or 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. Future date: Sunday, Dec. 9, 8 a.m.

Friday, Nov. 23, Arapahoe Bend Natural Area –Rigden Reservoir. Leader: Robert Beauchamp, tyrannusb@gmail.com, 970-232-9296. We'll walk off our Thanksgiving calories on this leisurely 1.5– 2.0 mile walk where we will explore Rigden Reservoir and surrounding riparian and pond habitat for interesting fall birds. Meet at 8 a.m. All levels are welcome.



Above: Barn Owl
Left: Blue Grosbeak
Both photos by Ron Harden.



Fort Collins Audubon Society
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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.