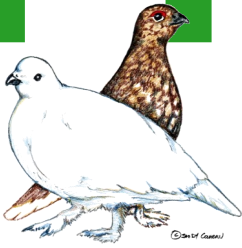


PTARMIGAN



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.

April 2019

Volume 50, Issue 4

FCAS Hosts

Andrew Bankert, Field Ornithologist

Presenting: "Birds and Wildlife in America's Last Frontier—Alaska"

Thursday, April 11

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

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

With nearly constant daylight in the summer, Alaska is filled with birdlife across the vast wilderness that covers most of the state. Local birder Andy Bankert will show photos, tell stories, and highlight conservation issues about the birds and wildlife in America's "Last Frontier." Andy will explore with us the scenic glacial bays at the northern extent of the Northern Pacific Rainforest to the barren tundra on the Arctic Plains, to the permanently snow-covered peaks dotting the middle of the state out to the remote islands in the Bering Sea.

Andy currently works as a Field Ornithologist for Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, but has



Red-throated Loon submitted by Andrew Bankert.

spent four summers working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska. His work included studying shorebird breeding demography on the state's North Slope, monitoring the recovery of Prince William Sound decades after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and surveying for seabirds in the Bering Sea. These experiences gave him up-close expo-

sure to parts of the world that few people ever get to see.

Join us on April 11 at the Fort Collins Senior Center for this program that is free and open to the public.

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 if you'd like to keep receiving it, please support your local chapter and subscribe. See details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.

President's Corner

By John Shenot

This month I want to focus on a local conservation crisis and explain how FCAS is responding. As you know, FCAS promotes the annual Fort Collins Christmas Bird Count (CBC). After reviewing data from this year's CBC, I became alarmed by a dramatic and rapid decline in the number of Eurasian Collared-Doves observed in recent years.

Collared-Doves were first observed on a Fort Collins CBC in 2002. Needless to say, local birders were thrilled to learn that this species had expanded into our area. And over the next 10 years, the number of Collared-Doves seen on the CBC grew steadily to over 3,000 individuals. No longer did anyone have to travel to India or Europe to add this beautiful bird to their life list—they were everywhere! But since 2012, something appears to have gone horribly wrong. The number of Collared-Doves seen locally on each of the last two CBCs was 60 percent lower than the peak in 2012!

On your behalf, FCAS decided to take immediate action to address this crisis. First, we're petitioning Colorado Parks and Wildlife to list the Eurasian Collared-Dove as a species of special concern. Second, because Mourning Doves compete with Collared-Doves, FCAS is encouraging our members to hunt Mourning Doves. Third, we've begun educating local residents on how to attract Collared-Doves to backyard bird feeders. And lastly, we are reminding our members not to believe everything they read on April 1 (with apologies to those of you who didn't read this on April 1). April Fools!

FCAS CONTACTS

Audubon@fortnet.org

President

John Shenot

970-682-2551

johnshenot@gmail.com

Vice President

Liz Pruessner

970-484-4371

fortcollinsaudubonmembership@gmail.com

Program Chair

Jessie Meschievitz

jmesch@slbbi.com

970-686-1424

Field Trip Coordinator

Sirena Brownlee

sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com

970-669-8095

Newsletter Editor

Carol Jones

970-482-6295

cjones@cowisp.net

For other FCAS contacts visit

www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

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

what are other
words for
fooling around?



horseplay, tomfoolery, clowning,
buffoonery, joking, dalliance,
hanky-panky, shenanigans,
carryings-on, roughhousing



 TheSaurus.plus

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Jim & Darla Anderson

Paul Avery

Thomas Brewer

Linda Cashman

Joan Craig

Chandrie & James Davis

James & Ruth DeMartini

Barbara L. Denny

Lauren DeRosa

John Wesley Dillon

Anna Fuller

Mary H. Gish

Raymond & Joan Glabach

Alan Godwin

Vince Griesemer

Sandy Hansen

Ron Harden

Kathleen M. Hardy

Judy L. Harrigal

David Hartley

Vickie Helton

Daniel L. Hogan

Neil Holstein

Dorothy A. Hudson

Paul W. Husted

Gina C. Janett

Nancy B. Jones

Sue Kenney

Jon Kindschy

Laurie & Tom Kleepies

Michael Lacy

Dorothy Leising

Fred J. Lord

Jane M. Low

Bob & Rosemary Lucas

Thomas Lynch

Marcia & Ron Maeda

Ted Manahan

Serena & Thomas Mangus

Connie Marvel

Sarah & Gerry Mitchell

Nancy J. Odom

Susan Peterson

Sandra Pitcaithley

Helmet Retzer

Harry Rose

Anne Saunders

Sheila & Van Baker

Torie Smith

Myron Smith

Paula & Edward Stearns

Douglas Swartz

Jim Tolstrup

Al Trask

Vickie Traxler

William West

April Whicker

Lori Zabel

FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

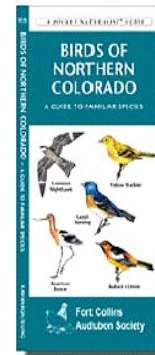
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



Two Women Ended the Deadly Feather Trade

John James Audubon, the well-known 19th-century painter of birds, considered the snowy egret to be one of America's most beautiful species. This smaller egret at that time was quite abundant. "I have visited some of their breeding grounds," Audubon wrote, "where several hundred pairs were to be seen, and several nests were placed on the branches of the same bush."

Audubon insisted that birds were so plentiful in North America that no depredation could extinguish a species. However, within just 50-some years after Audubon's death in 1851, the last

Passenger Pigeon—a species which originally numbered in the billions—died in a zoo in captivity.

The Snowy Egret was in a similar position by the late 1800s. In this era, fashionable women began wearing hats adorned with feathers, wings, and even entire taxidermied birds. The brilliant white plumage of the egrets, especially the gossamer wisps of feather more prominent during mating season, was in high demand among milliners. The plume trade was a terrible business. Hunters killed and skinned mature birds, and left orphaned hatchlings to starve or be eaten by crows. "It was a common thing for a rookery of several hundred birds to be attacked by plume hunters, and within two

to three days be completely destroyed," noted a former Smithsonian chief taxidermist.

The drivers of the plume trade were millinery centers in fashion-conscious New York and London. One person described London as "the Mecca of the feather killers of the world," and estimated that in a single nine-month period the London market had consumed feathers from

nearly 130,000 egrets. In fact, around 1886, it was estimated that 50 North American bird species were being slaughtered for their feathers.

Harriet Hemenway was a passionate amateur naturalist. In 1896, while reading

an article descri-

bing the plume trade, she learned that egrets and other wading birds were being decimated for their feathers. Harriet asked her cousin, Minna Hall, to help and the two crusading Boston socialites started a revolt. The cousins invited Boston's leading socialites to tea and urged them to stop wearing feathered hats. The two women also sent out leaflets that asked women to join a society for the protection of birds, especially the egret.

Their successful campaign resulted in more than 900 women joining their upper-crust boycott fashion with feathers. That same year, the two women organized the Massachusetts Audubon Society. These Audubon societies began in more than a dozen states and their federation would eventually become the National Audubon Society.



Snowy Egret from Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.



Red-winged Blackbird at Cottonwood Hollow by Ken Reek.



Things Get Wild at the Senior Center

Armed with shovels, 25 college students and three retirees descended upon the Fort Collins Senior Center last August. Their goal: to turn the patio into bird habitat.

As Fort Collins grows, wildlife habitat is decreasing, but there's a lot we can do to make our city more wildlife-friendly. This is the idea behind Habitat Hero, a core program of Audubon Rockies, which is a regional office of the National Audubon Society. By planting native gardens across Colorado and Wyoming, volunteers for this program are weaving together a network of habitat patches for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife.

The volunteers at the Senior Center—who were part of the Front Range Community College Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resources program and the City of Fort Collins's Building on Outdoor Trail Stewardship (BOOTS) program—were working with Audubon and the City to create a garden with 13 native species of plants. Thanks to their efforts, Fort Collins now has a little more wildlife habitat.

Wildlife aren't the only beneficiaries. The plants—which are adapted to Colorado's environment—require less water, and no chemical fertilizers and pesticides compared to turf and non-native plants.

"The goal of the Habitat Hero garden was multifaceted," said Sue Schafer, Volunteer Services Program Manager, for the City of Fort Collins Recreation Department. "First, we wanted to provide additional habitat

for birds and insects in the area. Secondly, we understand the healing powers of nature and wanted to provide more green space to the Senior Center patrons."

To meet the requirements of the Center, the Habitat Heroes pulled off the challenge of planting a garden without any garden beds, or even soil. Instead, they nes-

tled the native plants into containers filled with a plant-based medium donated by Fort Collins Nursery. "This container garden shows that you create a place for wildlife just about anywhere," said Alison Holloran, executive director of Audubon Rockies.

This garden was made possible by funding from the Xcel Energy Foundation. "The success of our company is directly related to the health of our communities and the health of our pollinator habitats," said Kynnne Martin, senior foundation representative at Xcel En-

ergy. "Through our Foundation grants we are proud to support the fight to save our pollinators by funding programs like Habitat Hero."

Do you want to become a Habitat Hero? All you need to plant a bird-friendly garden and submit an application to have it certified by Audubon Rockies. For planting resources and application instructions, please visit <https://rockies.audubon.org/habitat-hero> or email Jamie Weiss at jweiss@audubon.org.

Join us at 6:30 p.m. on the back patio of the Fort Collins Senior Center for the garden open house before the FCAS May 9 program meeting.



Volunteers planting the Habitat Hero Garden at the Senior Center, photo by Evan Barrientos. From left: Leah Bean, Brooke Caputo, and Barb Kittell.

Upcoming Field Trips

April 13, Saturday, Dixon Reservoir/Pineridge Natural Area. Leader: Nolan Bunting, nolanbunting@hotmail.com. Pineridge is a gem for resident foothills species and hopefully early migrant songbirds. Meet at 9 a.m. at Maxwell Natural Area parking lot, just west of the old Hughes Stadium site.

Sunday, April 14, 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 a.m. in the parking lot.

Saturday, April 20, CSU Environmental Learn-

ing Center. Leader: Robert

Beauchamp, tyrannusb@gmail.com, 970-232-9296. The ELC offers a variety of habitats to discover a variety of bird species. Plan for a 1.5–2-mile walks on the trails. All levels are welcome. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot.

Thursday, April 25, Douglas Reservoir. Leader: John Shenot, johnshenot@gmail.com or 802-595-1669. There should be a good mix of waterfowl and passerines on and around the reservoir at this time of year. It's also a good spot for raptors. Meet at 3 p.m. at the parking lot on the east side of the reservoir for a rare week-day field trip.



As mentioned in last month's issue of *The Ptarmigan*, our expenses have been increasing each year despite the FCAS Board's efforts to reduce them where possible. For example, just to conduct this year's fundraiser, we incurred printing charges to publicize the event and to create pledge sheets. To that end, we have been forced to resort to supplemental fund-raising events each year to cover the approximate \$2,000 shortfall between membership dues and other sources of income, and our total expenses.

This year the supplemental fund-raising event will be the 2019 "Challenge Birdathon." We last held a Birdathon in 2016 and learned a few lessons from that experience, some not comfortable. For that reason we created a set of rules which apply to both donors and those who plan to serve on a Birdathon team. At the web site, <http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org/birdathon.html>, may be found a general information sheet and links to (a) the rules of the game, (b) a mandatory team registration form, (c) a sheet on which team members can collect pledge information, and (d) a pledge form for individuals to submit their own pledge through the website.

There are some new details in this year's Birdathon:



Western Tanager by Bill Miller.

(1) the count period is from Friday, May 3 to Sunday, May 12; (2) teams may be two to five members; (3) the geographical count area consists of just Larimer and Weld counties; (4) there will be prizes of \$100 each awarded by the chapter in the three categories of highest species count, highest number of "unique" species (seen by just one team), and the team that raises the most donations; (5) team leaders must register their teams by Friday, April 26; and (6) teams must submit their species count on the latest version of the checklist found at <http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org/pdfs/FCASchecklist.pdf>.

Remember, the Birdathon is a fund raiser that is crucial to the financial health of the chapter. Please consider donating to this effort either with your own pledge or your participation as a team member, or both. Anyone can solicit pledges of other people even if they are not participating with a team. It would be nice if we could outperform 2016's Birdathon gross receipts of \$5323.46.

Please check out the web site, <http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org/birdathon.html> for all relevant details.

Upcoming FCAS Education Events

The mission of the FCAS is to promote the appreciation, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems. Foremost, in that mission is education. The educational events that we participate in throughout the year cannot take place without the time and expertise of the chapter members. The events for this spring include:

Poudre Canyon Group of the Sierra Club Nature Hike: Saturday April 27, 10 a.m.–12 p.m., Lory State Park.

Two FCAS guided bird hikes at the Fort Collins Senior Center and Rolland Moore Park: (1) Wednesday, May 8, 9–11 a.m.; and (2) Wednesday, May 29, 9–11 a.m.

The Senior Center Garden Open House: Thursday, May 9, 6:30–7:15 p.m. (before the regularly scheduled FCAS program meeting). Stop by the back patio of the Fort Collins Senior Center on your way to the meeting for refreshments, photos and used books for sale, and educational information on native plants and attracting pollinators to your backyard. See article on Page 4 for more information.

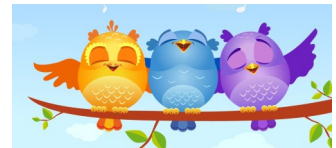
Two beginning bird classes at the Fort Collins Senior Center: (1) Wednesday, May 15, 9–11 a.m.; and (2) Wednesday, May 22, 9–11 a.m.

Three Community Festivals: (1) High Plains Environmental Center–Native Plant Sale, Saturday, May 4, FCAS booth with Audubon Rockies, and Saturday, May 18, FCAS booth with two bird hikes by Sheila ; (2) Poudre River Fest, TBD; and (3) Pleasant Valley Rendezvous, TBD.

Lory State Park Partnership (each event from 9 a.m.–11:00 a.m.): (1) Beginning Birding, Saturday, May 18; (2) Nesting, Saturday, June 15; (3) Native plants, Saturday, July 20; and (4) Migration, Saturday, August 17.

Please contact Barbara Patterson to volunteer: Barbara.patterson@frontrange.edu; (970) 214-3888.

UPCOMING
EVENTS



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.