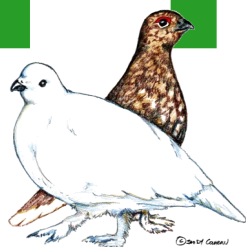


# PTARMIGAN



## 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.

**December 2019**

**Volume 50, Issue 9**

### **FCAS Hosts**

#### **December Potluck and Member Slideshow**

**Thursday, December 12**

**Potluck Buffet begins at 6:30 p.m.**

**Slides follow at approximately 7:15**

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

**Presented by: YOU, the Members**

**(Guests Welcomed)**

This is your evening to be introduced and receive the applause. Our December program will be presented by those of you, our members, who wish to share wildlife photos from your own photography collections in a slide show. To allow time for a number of our members to present their photos, please just one photographer per household and limit your presentation to no longer than 10 minutes. Bring your slides on a flash drive, and FCAS will provide a laptop, digital pro-



**Great Blue Heron and American White Pelicans**  
by FCAS member Joe Polazzi.

jector, screen, and sound system.

For the potluck, FCAS will provide coffee, tea, and water. Please bring a dish to share that will serve six to eight people, your own place setting, and serving and eating utensils.

Join us for this special program meeting on December 12 at the Fort Collins Senior Center. The potluck buffet begins at 6:30 p.m.

**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](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org).

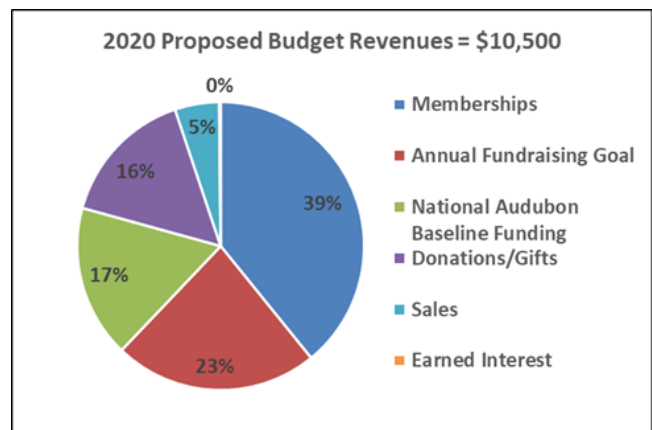
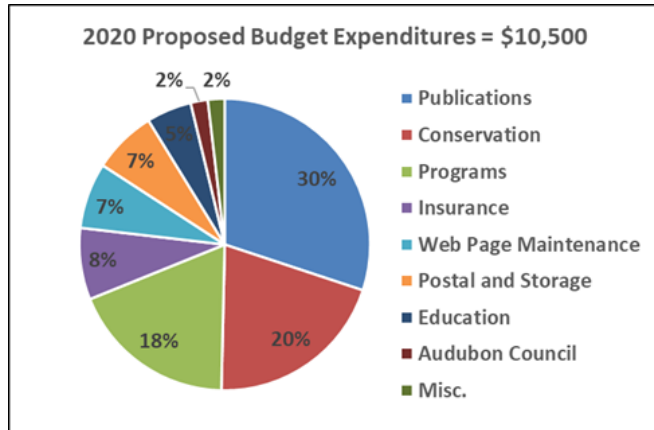
## President's Corner

by John Shenot

FCAS is a very small non-profit organization run by volunteers. Our annual expenditures in recent years have always been less than \$15,000 and are usually less than \$12,000. Our annual revenues have roughly equaled or exceeded our expenses, allowing us to maintain a steady or growing level of reserves without raising membership dues.

approve the budget at our annual meeting in January. The charts below show our proposed expenses and revenues for 2020 by category. The complete budget with details on expenses and revenues is available to any member upon request.

The Board is interested in having a third party audit our finances, just to make sure our accounting practices



According to our current bylaws, the Board must agree on a proposed annual budget each year and announce the proposed budget to the membership in our December newsletter. The membership then votes to

es 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.

*Happy Holidays and  
all the best for 2020*



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For other FCAS contacts visit

[www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org)

Visit us on Facebook:

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

## Nominating Committee Report on 2020 FCAS Board Candidates

In September, the FCAS Board of Directors appointed a nominating committee to identify candidates to serve as officers and directors for the 2020 Board. The committee members were Bill Miller, Barb Patterson, and John Shenot. In keeping with our bylaws, the nominating committee hereby announces the following slate of recommended candidates to be officially nominated at our January membership meeting:

President-Elect: none (still seeking a volunteer); Vice President: Liz Pruessner; Treasurer: Joe Polazzi; Recording Secretary: none (still seeking a volunteer); Directors-at-Large (up to six positions to fill): Alan Godwin, Ron Harden, Larry Sherman, and Hank Thode (still seeking volunteers).

Please note that the position of President is not up for election this year, as John Shenot will be serving the second year of a two-year term. The committee will keep looking for volunteers to nominate for the vacant positions. Please contact Bill ([bill5mcorp@gmail.com](mailto:bill5mcorp@gmail.com)), Barb ([Barbara.Patterson@frontrange.edu](mailto:Barbara.Patterson@frontrange.edu)), or John ([johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com)) if interested. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the January meeting. Members present will vote, and those elected will be installed at the conclusion of the meeting.



## Providing Scientific Data to Spur Action on Climate Change

On the cover of the Fall 2019 *Audubon* magazine, in large letters: “Birds can’t fight climate change. We can. Three hundred eighty-nine bird species are at risk of extinction in a warming world. Many can still be protected—if we act now.”



The entire issue is about the effects of climate change on birds and environments, and offers ideas on how to combat those effects. Most of the ideas are not new to those who have kept abreast of climate change issues. They include the call to support federal legislation to reduce green-

house gas emissions; support energy-efficiency standards; expand and incentivize clean energy options; improve fuel economy, speed up the move to electric vehicles, and expand public transportation; preserve and restore environments that soak up carbon, such as wetlands and forests; and invest in the transition to clean energy.

These are all important steps, and in order to be effective, data needs to be collected and analyzed that clearly shows the consequences climate change has upon birds, other species, humans, and the environment. Such data are the facts needed to spur action.

One interesting data collection effort is the Bird Genoscape Project.



**American Kestrel by Nick Komar.**  
A species highlighted by the Bird Genoscape Project.

The project was launched by researchers at UCLA’s Center for Tropical Research “to map the population-specific migratory routes of 100 species of migratory songbirds by harnessing the power of genomics. Identifying these migratory connections provides an effective tool for monitoring declining populations and for developing effective conservation strategies.”

The Bird Genoscape Project’s website (<https://www.birdgenoscape.org>) explains that a genoscape is “a

map of genetic variation across the geographic range of a species. A genoscape can be used to trace the breeding origin and wintering ground of a bird captured anywhere along its migratory pathway using DNA contained within a single feather. Genoscapes provide



**Western Tanager by Bill Miller.**  
A species highlighted by the Bird Genoscape Project.

more detail about population specific ranges and migratory routes than existing species-wide range maps.”

The project “provides efficient genetic tools for monitoring declining migratory bird species in the face of climate change and other anthropogenic stressors. The findings of the project serve as the essential first step toward building effective conservation and management strategies. In addition, the Genoscape Project also has the potential to engage citizen scientists on a large scale, as well as to invigorate the birding community with highly improved species range maps.”

As stated in the Education Corner on page 4 of this issue, citizen science is important for providing critical data on birds and other species. Heartening for birders everywhere is that it can be conducted right in our backyards. Citizen science includes the Christmas Bird Count, The Great Backyard Bird Count, FCAS’s Birdathon, and individual efforts, such as FCAS member Doug Swartz’s weekly surveys of all birds and numbers at North Shields Ponds and Greyrock Commons natural area. Doug reports his Greyrock findings to <https://ebird.org> and the North Shields Ponds findings to City of Fort Collins Natural Areas.

As Barbara Patterson said at the end of her education article: “Find a project right for you.” Participating in citizen science provides the data needed to show the effects of climate change and help move us toward making substantial efforts to combat it.





## Is Citizen Science a Part of the Solution?

*National Geographic* defines citizen science as the practice of public participation and collaboration in scientific research to increase scientific knowledge. Citizen science enables participants to contribute to research, increase their scientific understanding, and learn about environmental issues. Participants help researchers to maximize the amount of data collected on a project.

Citizen science is growing larger, more ambitious, and more networked. It has grown from farmers in China monitoring locust outbreaks thousands of years ago



From CBS News 2019.

to Audubon's long-running Christmas Bird Count (CBC) started in 1900. Frank Chapman converted the "Christmas Side Count," in which hunters chose sides and shot as many birds as they could, to the CBC as it exists today. Now there are projects all over the world, including everything

from mapping freshwater turtles in Australia to counting Pikas in Rocky Mountain National Park. Organizations, government agencies, and universities have jumped in providing platforms for online data and coordinating the wide variety of projects. Citizen scientists can provide a long-term perspective that is vital for conservationists, and can help find solutions and guide management planning. For example, new findings just published in the journal of *Science*



From <https://birdconservancy.org>.

confirm staggering losses among birds. This is based on nearly 50 years of information collected, in part, by volunteer participants. Data on wintering and breeding grassland birds are used to create an integrated population model to identify causes of population declines.

Collaborative approaches also are being developed to determine where conservation is needed most and to guide the work on the ground. In Fort Collins in 2013, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies developed a citizen science program to monitor the Eastern Screech-Owl, an indicator species of riparian forest health along the Poudre River Urban Corridor. With the help of community members, including CSU and Front Range Community College students, the data was collected and analyzed to guide management opportunities that improve occupancy rates by maintaining riparian connectivity and promoting variation in vegetation height.

It is important to continue the hard work of documenting and protecting the amazing diversity on this planet. The CBC, which will be 120 years old next year, as well as other citizen science projects will continue to need volunteers.

Other projects in our area include: (1) Bird Conservancy of the Rockies' Bald Eagle Watch and Brown-capped Rosy-Finch Monitoring; (2) Rocky Mountain National Park's Lily Lake Phenology and the Dragonfly Mercury Project; (3) Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Nest-Watch, Project FeederWatch, and the Great Backyard Bird Count; and (4) City of Fort Collins' Nature in the City Biodiversity Project.

These are just a few of the projects looking for volunteers. Find a project that's right for you, volunteer, and contribute to science in a meaningful way.

## FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Mary Beck – Marguerite Matthews – Tad Leeper – Mark Wagner – Steve Groeteke – Cheryl Orwig

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.



## Sign Up for Your Local Christmas Bird Counts

The 120th Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will take place from December 14 to January 5. Fort Collins has the longest continuous CBC in Colorado, beginning in 1947. The CBC is the longest running citizen science survey in the world, and it provides critical data on bird population trends.

Tens of thousands of participants know that it is also a great way to make new friends and have fun! Volunteers are assigned in teams to cover designated areas within a 15-mile diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. Advanced birding skills are not required; beginners can be paired with more experienced birders. Volunteers who live within a count circle that just wish to record what comes to their backyard feeders also are welcome to participate; they should contact the CBC coordinator for details.

The following lists the location of the CBC, its date,



and the person to contact to participate or for more information. Participate in as many counts as you wish!

**Fort Collins CBC**, Saturday, Dec. 14. Compiler is Tom Hall, [redbear44@msn.com](mailto:redbear44@msn.com).

**Nunn CBC**, Saturday, Dec. 21. Compiler is Gary Lefko, [coloradobird-er@yahoo.com](mailto:coloradobird-er@yahoo.com).

**Rawhide Power Plant CBC**, Saturday, Dec. 28. Compiler is Doug Kibbe, [dpkibbe@msn.com](mailto:dpkibbe@msn.com).

**Pawnee National Grasslands CBC**, Saturday, Dec. 28. Compiler is Gary Lefko, [coloradobird-er@yahoo.com](mailto:coloradobird-er@yahoo.com).

**Loveland CBC**, Wednesday, Jan. 1. Compilers are Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com) and Nick Komar, [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net).

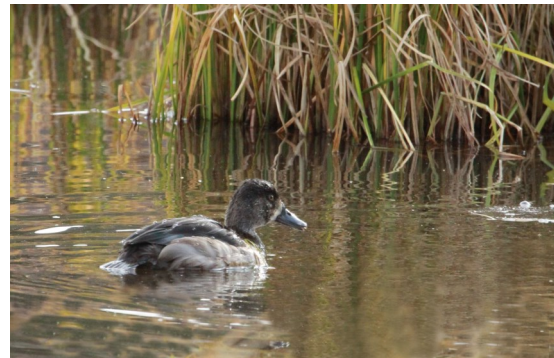
**Rocky Mountain National Park CBC**, Saturday, Jan. 4. Compiler is Scott Rashid, [srashid@carriep.org](mailto:srashid@carriep.org).

## 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. Changes to dates, meeting times or locations, and trip leaders are occasionally unavoidable (check the FCAS Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety> for cancellations due to inclement weather). Contact the listed trip leader prior to the day of the trip or visit [fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://fortcollinsaudubon.org) for more information and updates. RSVP strongly encouraged.*

**Saturday, Dec. 7, Running Deer Natural Area.** Leader: Nolan Bunting, [nolanbunting@hotmail.com](mailto:nolanbunting@hotmail.com). Join Nolan for a walk around Running Deer and Prospect Ponds to view wintering waterfowl and hopefully a few raptors. Plan for a 2-mile walk on the trails. All levels are welcome and a spotting scope will be available. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot.

**Sunday, Dec. 8, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto: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 8 a.m. in the parking lot.



Ring-necked Duck by Ron Harden.

### FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

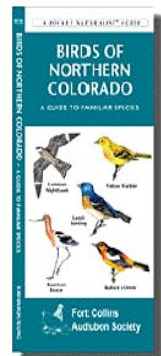
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



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



Printed on recycled paper

### Membership Application

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

- |                          |   |          |  |
|--------------------------|---|----------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member<br>Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email | \$ 20    | Name: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member<br>Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail  | \$ 30    | Address: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member<br>Receive FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail or email    | \$750    | City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Additional support for FCAS programs  | \$ _____ | Phone: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Additional support for Alex Cringan Fund<br>(natural history education grants)    | \$ _____ | Email: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New NAS member<br>Receive the NAS <i>Audubon</i> by mail                          | \$ 20    | May we send you FCAS email alerts if updates occur for field trips, programs, etc.? Yes or No                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Renewing NAS member<br>Receive the NAS <i>Audubon</i> by mail                     | \$ 35    | May we contact you for volunteer activities such as helping at 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).