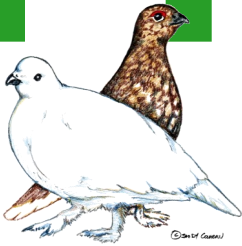


# PTARMIGAN



## 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.

January 2021

Volume 52, Issue 1

### FCAS Hosts

Jennifer Timmer, Research Scientist, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Presenting: "Integrated Breeding Bird Monitoring: A Collaborative Approach"

Thursday, Jan. 14

Announcements: 7 p.m.; Program 7:20 p.m.

\*\*\*This will be an online meeting using Zoom\*\*\*

Enter the following link on your web browser at or before 7 p.m. and follow the instructions to join the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88270817583>

The Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions (IMBCR) program was created in 2008 in Colorado to respond to national recommendations for improving avian monitoring. Today, the IMBCR program is the second largest breeding bird monitoring program in the nation, spanning the Great Plains to the Great Basin. The strength of the IMBCR program lies in its partnership with multiple state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations. The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies spearheads the effort. Surveys and inference about bird populations are not road-



IMBCR survey technician. Photo by Nick Van Lanen.

based, and bird populations can be monitored over time in management units to evaluate avian responses. This program, led by Jennifer Timmer, a research scientist with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, will cover the need for a rigorous breeding bird monitoring program, how population estimates are used in management and conservation efforts, how to access these estimates from the

Rocky Mountain Avian Data

Center, and how you can contribute to breeding bird monitoring.

All FCAS members and guests are welcomed and encouraged to join this Zoom meeting on January 14.

**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 of the newsletter or on our website at [www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org).

**It's time to renew your membership!** Dues are \$20 to receive the *Ptarmigan* digitally or \$30 via mail. Use the form on the back page of the newsletter to renew by mail, renew at a program meeting, or online at [www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org). Remember, your membership and contributions are tax deductible.

In happier times, when our chapter could meet in person, I had lots of opportunities to socialize with FCAS members at the beginning and end of our programs. I miss chatting with members, face-to-face, on a regular basis. It was often the highlight of my month—and I really mean that.

I'm hopeful that those days will return as soon as we can safely manage in 2021. But in the meantime, FCAS will continue to hold chapter meetings online, using Zoom. We've had five Zoom meetings so far, and I can't pretend everything has gone perfectly smoothly each time, but we're doing the best we can. There are even some positive aspects to meeting online. We've been able to take advantage of speakers from other states that wouldn't normally come to Fort Collins for a program, and maybe some of our members have attended online meetings who couldn't attend in-person meetings even before the pandemic. However, I want to make every meeting we host as good as possible, and to do that I really need your input on two important matters.

First of all, I would like to know how the online meetings have been going for you. I'm not fishing for compliments; I want honest feedback so we can improve. Are the instructions for logging on to the meeting and participating in the meeting clear? Is the technology working for you or is it frustrating? Do you have suggestions

for how to make the online meetings more interactive or otherwise improve them?

Second, I want to hear your thoughts about what we should do when in-person meetings

once again become possible. Undoubtedly, there will be a period of several months when some of our members will feel safe meeting in person and some will not. It isn't clear to me, today, if we would be able to meet in-person and also live broadcast the meeting online. I realize this is technologically possible, but it may be logistically complicated. We could give it a try, but offering both options would also roughly double our meeting costs.

I would greatly appreciate any feedback you have to offer on these two key issues. You can send your thoughts to [johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com).



## FCAS CONTACTS

### President

John Shenot

802-595-1669

[johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com)

### Vice President

Liz Pruessner

970-484-4371

[lizpru@colostate.edu](mailto:lizpru@colostate.edu)

### Program Chair

Jessie Meschievitz

[jlmesch852@gmail.com](mailto:jlmesch852@gmail.com)

970-324-1550

### Field Trip Coordinator

Sirena Brownlee

[sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com](mailto:sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com)

970-669-8095

### Membership Chair

Harry Rose

970-430-6731

[hrose@loadaway.net](mailto:hrose@loadaway.net)

### Newsletter Editor

Carol Jones

970-481-5213

[cjones@cowisp.net](mailto:cjones@cowisp.net)

For other FCAS contacts visit

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

Visit us on Facebook:

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

## Thanks to all who entered the FCAS Photo Contest!

Robin Allison  
Jay Breidt  
Vyvyan Brunst  
Lawrence Caputo  
Patricia Cohen  
Aaron Crawford  
James Demartini  
Taz Feldis  
Alan Godwin  
Larry Griffin  
Mark Hanusack  
Ron Harden

Carole Hossan  
Ronald Jensen  
Jonathan Kershner  
Jon Kindschy  
Fred Kreiner  
Andrew Monson  
Lori Nixon  
Lori Pivonka  
John Reichhardt  
Helmut Retzer  
Harry Rose  
Lawrence Sherman

David Sitzman  
Frank Stermitz  
Doug Swartz  
Greg Vassilopoulos  
Mark Wagner  
Joe Webber  
Sheila Webber  
James Welch  
Robin Welsh  
Roger Wieck  
Lori Zabel

Your photos and donations made this contest a great success. Our sincere gratitude to you all!



## Our Thanks to Bill Miller

After 33-plus years of active participation and leadership, Bill Miller has stepped down from the Board of FCAS. During his time, he served in many different roles and has been a tireless advocate for birds, conservation, and the environment. A partial list of the important positions Bill has filled includes: chapter president for multiple terms; a board director; Conservation Committee Chair, including writing this column for more than a decade; chapter representative on the Audubon Colorado Council, which included working with other Audubon chapters in the region to bring awareness and advocacy for conservation and legislative issues; organized the Birdathons and other fundraisers; led field trips (his Pawnee National Grassland Field trip is a not-to-be missed experience); spearheaded the establishment of two Important Bird Areas (Fossil Creek Open Space IBA and Poudre River Urban Corridor IBA) and laid the groundwork for a third IBA at Soapstone Prairie/Red Mountain Natural Area; and conducted outreach and built relationships with other conservation organizations to help increase the effectiveness of our actions. Additionally, he kept the library, by-laws, and history of FCAS, and is the institutional memory of this organization. In so many ways, Bill has been a generative force that has kept FCAS going through thick and thin, recruiting other members (including myself) to serve on the Board.

Other groups in this community have benefited from the energy and actions of Bill and his wife Sue, who is a

vital partner in their conservation efforts. They have served with The Friends of the Avery House, Poudre Heritage Alliance, and Fort Collins Waterworks to help educate citizens and preserve our local history. The work of the Poudre Heritage Foundation Board helped establish the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage

Area designation through the National Park Service. At the Avery House they enjoyed appearing as Mother and Father Christmas for the Holiday Open House from 2005–2017, wearing gorgeous costumes made by Sue Miller. I hope you had a chance to visit the Avery House to see them in action.

Bill served on the City of Ft. Collins Natural Resources Advisory Board (NRAB) during the period that the natural areas program was imagined and developed. The purchase and preservation of all the natural areas lands that we enjoy today came out of the ideas and program that the NRAB helped create while Bill was a member.

I am sure I have left out plenty of the story, but it is clear that civic engagement and service are a way of life for Bill and Sue Miller. The FCAS has been so fortunate to benefit from their wholehearted commitment and support of our mission for at least three decades. All of FCAS wishes you

well in the next stage of your lives and hope to see you back at our meetings when we can hold them in person.

Thank you, Bill, for all you have done to help this chapter thrive and for the conservation successes you have worked to achieve in this community.



Bill and Sue Miller as Father and Mother Christmas at the Avery House.

## FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Dorothy Adel  
Dale Agger  
Robert Beauchamp  
Mary Beck  
Craig Benkman  
Frank Breidt  
Tom & Anne Butler

Marcee Camenson  
Linda Cashman  
Danny Feig-Sandoval  
Taz Feldis  
Anna Fuller  
Laura Grant  
Pat Hayward

Clifford Hendrick  
Carole Hossan  
Joel Hurmence  
Dean & Loretta Klingenberg  
Karen Mancini  
Connie Marvel

Barbara Maynard  
David Otis  
Tim Priehs  
Rich Roberts  
Harry Rose  
H. Bruce Vigneault





## Looking Forward to 2021

We have just experienced three of the largest fires in Colorado history, and while we were living under a huge plume of smoke, I waited and wondered about what's next. Fire is a natural part of the ecosystem, and an understanding of the types of fires and the effects on birds is under intense study.

The big question is the difference between a prescribed fire and a wildland fire, and the effect the burn severity has on habitat. The Burns and Birds network is studying this by setting up a network of study sites across eight western states. Researchers have documented that migratory songbirds tend to decline during the year of a prescribed burn. Resident birds

weren't adversely affected. Instead, their populations increased the following year. The density of standing trees, a critical component of cavity-nesting birds, increased their population numbers after burns.

Lower-elevation conifer forests typically have low densities of large trees interspersed with open, park-like conditions. Frequent low-severity wildfire helps clear shrubs and smaller trees. Wildfires burn more severely, leaving large forest openings and maintaining diversity across forest landscapes. Fire suppression, along with a warming climate, has altered this forest structure, resulting in greater densities of trees and denser understory vegetation. The Bird Conservancy of the Rockies' Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) identified birds as a focus for monitoring wildlife habitat objectives. The relationship between birds and fire reflected differences in lifestyles and feeding guilds. For example, aer-

ial insectivores such as Olive-sided Flycatcher and Western Wood-Pewee were more prevalent due to more productive understory for catching insects on the wing. Larger pine trees with less competition produce more cones, favoring Clark's Nutcracker and Pygmy Nut-

hatch.

Fires can touch off a frenzy of ecological activity. Despite mega fires' destructiveness, a burned forest is more like a bank vault with the door knocked wide open. The fires knock the trees' chemical defenses out, but barely touch their nutritious interior. The bugs come running in—some use heat-sensing organs and some follow smoke plumes. Accord-



Cameron Peak Fire by Barbara Patterson.

ing to All About Birds: "The beetles lay eggs, and their larvae tunnel through the tree eating everything in sight. Predatory beetles and parasitic wasps flood in to feed off the larvae, and the food web takes off from there. This flood of food brings in woodpeckers, flycatchers, thrushes, swallows and finches."

So, we know the fire relationship between birds and fire is strong. However, bird responses differ. To predict how a given species might respond to fire, consider the birds' strategy for nesting and foraging. And remember: it is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Birds respond differently to fire severity classes, and differently to each stage of recovery. Both wildfire and prescribed fire are beneficial to the long-term persistence of bird populations and maintaining a mosaic of conditions across the landscape. I can't wait to hike these areas and see what the year 2021 brings.

*Wishing you and yours all the  
best in 2021*





## Congratulations FCAS Photo Contest Winners

Congratulations and applause to the winners of the FCAS Photo Contest 2020! There were so many wonderful photos entered that it was quite hard to choose just one favorite. The votes placed by FCAS members and visitors to the website were tallied. It was a close vote with 40 of the 149 photos entered receiving one or more votes.

**1<sup>st</sup> Place, Ron Harden, “Mom! Here Mom!”**  
*Excited, these fledgling Barn Swallows would see Mom coming from a long way off and already be begging. Between Mom and Dad's visits they sat patiently, jockeying around on their perch and viewing their new world.*

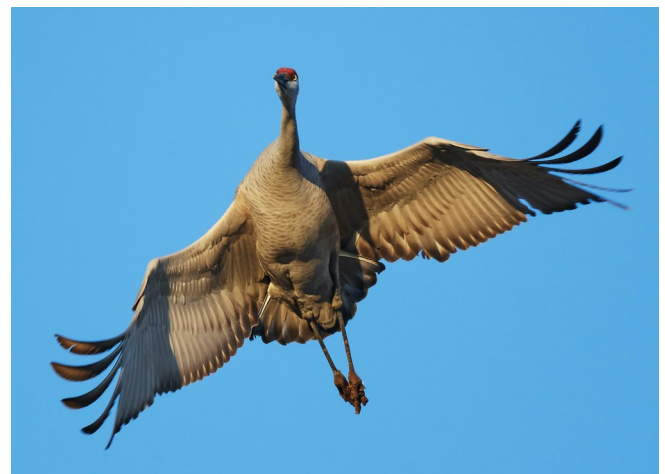


**2<sup>nd</sup> Place, (3-way tie) Robin Allison, “Big Stick Contest.”**  
*Great Blue Herons sprucing up the nest (below left). Loveland Colorado, April 2020.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place, David Sitzman.**  
*White-faced Ibis at Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge (below right).*



**2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Robin Allison, “Moose! I thought I was a squirrel!”**  
*Baby moose, less than a week old, investigating a tree. Rocky Mountain National Park, June 2020.*



**3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Roger Wieck, “Fly Over.”**  
*Sandhill Crane .*



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.

- |                          |   |        |  |
|--------------------------|---|--------|--|
| <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).