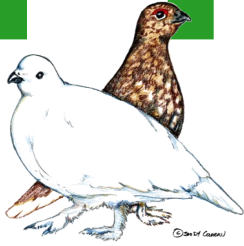


# PTARMIGAN



## 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.

October 2021

Volume 53, Issue 7

### FCAS Hosts

**Kelsea Holloway, Wildlife Biologist, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies**

**Presenting: "It's About Dam Time"**

**Thursday, October 14**

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

**Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.\*\***

**Masks Requested**

**\*\*\*This program also will be accessible online using Zoom\*\*\***

**Enter the following link on your web browser at or before 7 p.m. and follow the instructions to join the meeting virtually: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84003372778>**

Beavers are valuable ecosystem engineers that got a bad reputation in the past. Bird Conservancy of the Rockies Private Land Wildlife Biologist, Kelsea Holloway, has spent the last five years working along the lower South Platte observing how beavers are making a difference on the river.

In her presentation she will discuss the benefits of beavers, why they have piqued her interest, and how she is working with them to create higher quality habitat for wildlife.

Kelsea Holloway assists multiple counties in north-



**Beaver dam by Kelsea Holloway.**

east Colorado with property management for wildlife and wetland restoration.

NOTE: Due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, it may become necessary to cancel the in-person portion of our meeting and conduct the meeting entirely via Zoom. If you plan to attend the meeting in person, please

check our website, Instagram, or Facebook page the day of the meeting to see if the in-person gathering has been canceled. We hope that won't be necessary. Either way, join us. 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 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).

Fall is upon us and that means it's time once again to start planning for the future of FCAS. Over the next two months, the Board of Directors will prepare a draft budget for 2022 that will be presented to the members for review

and voted on at our annual meeting in January 2022. At that same meeting, the members present also will elect four officers (president-elect, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary) and up to six Directors at Large to lead FCAS in 2022. In keeping with our bylaws, these positions all serve one-year terms. The president, however, serves a two-year term. I started

my current term in January 2021, so we will not be electing a new president until January 2023.

The first step in our election process is to create a nominating committee. The role of this committee is to identify and nominate a slate of candidates for all of the elected positions. The nominating committee also helps the president identify potential candidates to chair our various committees. (Committee chairs are members of the Board of Directors, but they are appointed by the president rather than elected.)

I need to find three volunteers as soon as possible to

serve on the nominating committee and get started on this crucial task. The more FCAS members you know, the better you'll be at this task – but if you like networking, don't hesitate to volunteer even if you moved here yesterday! The current board members will do everything possible to make sure the nominating committee succeeds. If this sounds like something you'd like to do, please contact me at [johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com).



WE NEED YOU



**Downy Woodpecker**  
at McMurry 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





## The Rights of Nature Movement

Does the Poudre River (and any other body of water or natural ecosystem) deserve the same rights human beings enjoy? Does our environment have the right to flourish, be free from pollution, regenerate itself and its' inhabitants, have protection from potentially harmful human activities and seek legal redress when damaged or threatened? The Rights of Nature movement would answer a resounding "yes" to those questions. It is bringing change around the world by recognizing that right and is working to grant ecosystems legal standing. Advocates for the movement are making headway through actions in the courts, at the United Nations, through local ballot initiatives, constitutional amendments, and declarations and resolutions by city councils and municipalities.

The premise of The Rights of Nature movement is that natural systems have a legal right to exist and thrive, and that right should be defended in court, just like the rights of human beings and corporations. This radical concept has long been embraced by indigenous and native peoples, and is part of the culture of co-existing with nature. The recognition that humanity is not separate from the natural world and cannot survive without learning to live in harmony with nature is long overdue. The old paradigm of continuous exploitation of the world's natural resources has led us to our current climate crisis, but people are mobilizing everywhere to upend the status quo and raise our collective consciousness.

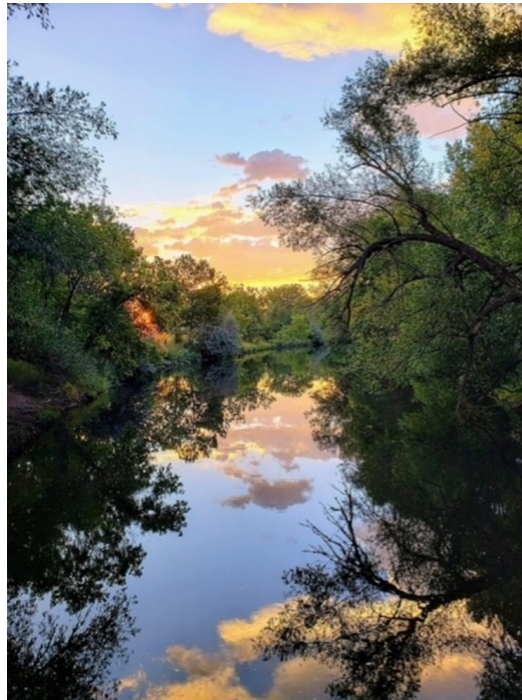
In 2008, Ecuador became the first country in the world to recognize the Rights of Nature in their new constitution. Laws protecting the Rights of Nature

have been passed in Columbia, Bolivia, Nepal, India, Cameroon, Bangladesh, Australia, New Zealand, Uganda, Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and the United States. Legal precedent is growing

around the world as courts have upheld those rights particularly in cases involving rivers, the Amazon rainforest, and watersheds. Indigenous communities are some of the strongest leaders in this growing global movement, with tribal nations achieving legal status for their native lands, rivers, and plants. In Minnesota, the White Earth Band of Ojibwe formally recognized that manoomin (wild rice) "...possesses inherent rights to exist, flourish, regenerate, and evolve, as well as inherent rights to restoration, recovery, and preservation."

Elsewhere in the United States, in 2020 voters in Orange County, Florida passed the Right to Clean Water Initiative by 89 percent, granting rights to their rivers and streams, and the right of citizens to have clean water. This is the largest municipality in the country

to pass a Rights of Nature law. A statewide Right to Clean Water amendment is being prepared for the 2022 Florida ballot. There is reason for hope as communities across the country are acting, including here in Colorado with Lafayette becoming the second U.S. city to enact a Rights of Nature law in 2020. This year, the Town Board of Nederland passed the Rights of Nature for Boulder Creek Resolution to grant inherent legal rights for the entire Boulder Creek watershed. There is much more to accomplish. To get involved or for more information, check out Boulder Rights of Nature <https://boulderrightsofnature.org/>.



The Cache la Poudre River by Eric Salahub.

### FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

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.

Linda Bell  
Cindy DeCrescenbtis  
Margret A. Dereus

Judy Holt  
Carol D. Klingensmith

Jane Michalski  
Janna Thompson



## The Power of a Plume

Your porch bird feeder gently swings as a Wilson's Warbler lands on it for an early autumn snack. He has stopped by during fall migration on the way to his Central American wintering grounds. As he snacks, you notice the glimmer of an aluminum band on his leg.

At some point, he found his way into the hands of an ornithologist, who banded him and may have taken a feather or two. Collaborators across North America send feathers to the [Bird Genoscape Project](#) (BGP), "to map the population-specific migratory routes of 100 species of migratory songbirds by harnessing the power of genomics," according to their website.

Genomics studies the entirety of an organism's genetic material, and the BGP uses genomics to understand migratory patterns of songbirds. The project is spearheaded by Colorado State University's Kristen Ruegg and University of California Los Angeles's Tom Smith.

"The goal of the project is to use genomic markers to track migratory birds across space and time," said Ruegg in a [recent interview with CSU's Source](#), "It's like



Yellow Warbler by Noelle Mason.

ancestry.com for birds."

Birds sampled on wintering grounds in Mexico or Central America can be identified and linked to specific populations on the North American breeding grounds.

In the field, BGP scientists and collaborators set up mist nets to catch the birds as they migrate. These nets are designed to be unseen to birds, although sometimes they catch the forgetful field scientist.

Once gently extracted and in the hand of a properly trained scientist, the bird is banded with a unique ID number. Most importantly, a flight feather from the bird's tail is extracted and placed into a small BGP coin envelope.

In Ruegg's lab at CSU, over 200,000 of these envelopes fill her freezers. The frozen feather samples from birds all across North America are stored until they are needed for research. Eventually, a graduate student, postdoc, or Ruegg herself will select a group of feathers for genomic analysis.

First, the Ruegg lab manager extracts DNA from the calamus, or shaft, of each chosen feather. This region

which connects the feather to the bird holds invaluable DNA. The DNA may undergo a wide variety of sophisticated molecular lab techniques to understand various characteristics and piece together a bird's genome.

Using the data gathered from the DNA, an individual bird can be linked to a breeding or wintering population anywhere in North America. This allows the BGP to map the connectivity of songbirds' populations from their wintering grounds to their breeding grounds.

This information is critical to understanding the challenges migratory birds face, especially regarding changing climate patterns. The work done by Dr. Ruegg and her colleagues seeks to inform conservation policies for migratory birds and further the field of genomics for climate science.

The Bird Genoscape Project is gaining momentum and national recognition quickly. National Geographic created a [feature video](#) in collaboration with Days Edge Productions, which highlights the work being done by Ruegg and her lab.

The Wilson's Warbler finishes his meal at your feeder and takes flight as quickly as he arrived; his wings will carry him off to some tropical wintering paradise. The feathers on his wings hold more power than he is aware of, and they might just be the key to his species' future survival.



Noelle Mason with Goldfinch.  
Photo by Marina Rodriguez.



Kristen Ruegg in her lab.  
From Day's Edge Productions.

*Noelle Mason is a junior at CSU studying biology and conservation. She is a two-year laboratory and curatorial assistant for the Bird Genoscape Project, science reporter for the Rocky Mountain Collegian, and communications officer for Alpha Sigma Kappa, a women in STEM sorority.*







Scott Cobble with Otis at McMurtry Natural Area in 2015.  
Photo by Liz Pruessner

Our dear friend and former FCAS Board member Scott Cobble passed away on September 5 due to complications from Alzheimer's. Scott served on the Board as recording secretary for nearly 20 years, taking notes by hand and then transcribing them at home into meticulous meeting minutes. Former chapter President Bill Miller recalls that Scott participated in every way he could. He was instrumental in helping organize our first ever silent auction fund

raiser, staffed the FCAS table at various events, and enthusiastically shared his love of birds and wildlife. Each year he looked forward to the spring migration and his favorite FCAS activity was the Birdathon.

Watson Lake State Wildlife Area was his ideal birding locale where he could be found almost daily, adding to his species list, keeping track of any renovations (like

the fish ladder), and conversing with each person he met. Scott was a good birder who made friends easily and knew all the nature lovers who frequented Watson Lake. He was big-hearted, generous, and a great ambassador for birding and the natural world. Scott brought many new members to FCAS by inviting people to attend our monthly programs.

Scott was a sweet natured and supportive friend. Bill Miller noted: "One of Sue's and my most fond memories of Scott was when, in September of 2014, following my own quadruple bypass surgery, he offered to visit on many occasions so Sue could grocery shop, visit her own doctors, and so forth, while I was recuperating. He would accompany me as we walked around the block, building up my strength as I pushed a walker around the block. Scott will be sorely missed."

Thank you, Scott Cobble, for your friendship, all you did for birds, and your service with FCAS. In lieu of flowers, Scott's family welcomes donations in his memory to FCAS at <http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org/> or the Alzheimers Association of Colorado: <https://www.alz.org/co>. You may also visit <https://www.bohlenderfuneralchapel.com/> to offer condolences or share memories.

## Field Trips

*All field trips are free (unless otherwise noted) and are currently open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Please understand that changes to dates, meeting times, locations, and trip leaders are occasionally unavoidable. To register for any trip, please visit the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/123106328705>), Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/fcaudubon/>), or [fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://fortcollinsaudubon.org) for a link to registration that will be posted one week before the scheduled trip. Due to Covid, attendance is limited to a maximum of 10 individuals. Waitlisted individuals for a trip will be sent a link for the next available trip before registration is open to the public.*

**Saturday, Oct. 16, Well Gulch Trail, Lory State Park.** Leader: Nolan Bunting, [nbunting@rams.colostate.edu](mailto:nbunting@rams.colostate.edu). Sign up link will be posted on Facebook and Instagram before the trip. We will look for birds in their mountains to plains migration, along with migrating birds flying south for the winter. The hike is a moderately difficult 2.5 miles Meet at the Well Gulch trail parking lot at 8 a.m. A state parks day pass or annual pass is required.

**Sunday, Oct. 24, Loveland Lakes area.** Leader: Nick Komar, [quetzal65@comcast.net](mailto:quetzal65@comcast.net). Sign up link will be posted on Facebook and Instagram before the trip. Meet at Lake Loveland swim beach for carpooling at 9 a.m. Expect to be out a long time and to see a great quantity of birds. Bring picnic lunch and a telescope if you have one.

## Past Field Trip Highlights

**August 29, Prospect Ponds Natural Area.** Leader: Nolan Bunting. This was an amazing exploration of

a lesser known natural area, during which we saw 18 species in two hours on a one-mile hike. Many species seen are summer residents, with a few migratory species. Highlights of the trip included a Green Heron, an actively fishing Osprey, a flock of turkeys, and a Black-crowned Night-Heron. This field trip included a variety of habitats from agricultural to riparian — definitely a recommended walk!



Birding at Prospect Ponds by Nolan Bunting.



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