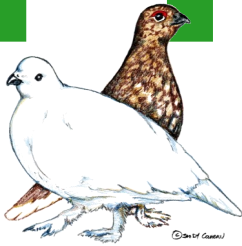


# PTARMIGAN



## 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.

**November 2022**

**Volume 54, Issue 8**

### **FCAS Hosts Marion Clément**

**Mexican Spotted Owl Coordinator, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies**

**Presenting:**

**“A Tiny Menace in the Forest: the Northern Saw-whet Owl”**

**Thursday, November 10**

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

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

**\*\*\*This program also will be accessible via Zoom\*\*\***

**Enter the following link at or before 7 p.m. to join the meeting:**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85330025573>**

Being a small owl with bright yellow eyes and long lashes, it's no wonder the Northern Saw-whet Owl recently won Cornell Lab of Ornithology's cutest owl award. Despite its undeniable charm, almost nothing is known about this common species. Since 1994, banding stations across North America have collaborated to shed light on this nocturnal predator. Due to the owl's small size and nomadic behavior, banding recoveries are still the best tool to understand the owl's population trends, habitat needs,



Northern Saw-whet Owl by Alyssa Armbruster.

migration, and breeding. There is still so much to discover.

Marion Clément runs a fall migration station in Fort Collins that catches, bands, and releases Northern Saw-Whet Owls to contribute data to Project OwlNet. Join Marion on Nov. 10 at the Fort Collins Senior Center to learn about this owl, how this nationwide project began, and future steps we need to take to protect this owl. Be there in person to be eligible for a special treat/door prize. The public is always 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 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).



This month I'm looking for candid feedback. Prior to COVID, it was typical for 40-60 people to attend our monthly program/guest lecture. A few times our numbers approached 100. When we switched to virtual meetings, attendance held steady, and once we came close to 200 attendees!

Since September 2021, we've been hosting hybrid programs combining in-person attendance with an online option using Zoom. Unfortunately, we have not returned to anything like what was normal pre-COVID. Until very recently, total attendance has held steady in that 40-60 person range most months, but in-person attendance has always been low (sometimes less than 20). This saddens me because attending our programs in-person is, for me, the most enjoyable part of being an FCAS member. Our meetings are what makes FCAS a Society. They are social.

To make matters worse, our total attendance (in-person plus online) has been down for the past few meetings. We expect some guest lectures to be more popular than others, but is this a trend? I want to find out and see what we can do to make attendance at future programs as attractive and enjoyable as possible. Especially in-person attendance. Please, if you are reading this, send me an email ([johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com)) and let me know if there are guest lecturers or topics you'd like to see on our



our schedule. If you used to attend meetings but haven't recently, I'd love to know why. Or, if you've chosen online participation over in-person attendance, again it would be helpful to know why and know if we could do anything to entice you back to in-person attendance. I hope to hear from many of you!

## Book Sale

FCAS is holding a book sale at our December Slideshow and Potluck, featuring bird and nature guidebooks. Bring in any books to donate at the November meeting at the Senior Center. Come back in December to browse the great selection and add to your collection.



## 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

Nolan Bunting

[nbunting@rams.colostate.edu](mailto:nbunting@rams.colostate.edu)

970-669-8095

### Membership Chair

Harry Rose

970-430-6731

[hlrose@toadaway.net](mailto:hlrose@toadaway.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>



*Happy  
Thanksgiving  
from FCAS*

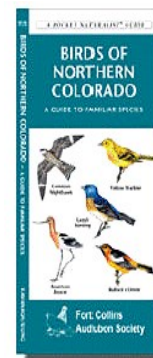
## FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

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 Loveland West  
Outdoor Gear  
2665W. Eisenhower  
(970) 667-7375

Jax Outdoor Gear  
1200 N. College  
(970) 221-0544



## Climate-Smart Agriculture Initiatives

These days it may seem hard to feel hopeful with the incessant drumbeat of depressing news from climate related disasters. I take heart from the announcement of funding for a huge range of carbon reduction opportunities by the Biden Administration.

The recently enacted Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 is an historic piece of legislation that will deliver unprecedented investment in programs to tackle Climate Change. Some of the funding will go toward “climate proofing” our infrastructure and building clean/renewable energy supply chains to incentivize production of batteries, solar and offshore wind components, carbon capture, and clean hydrogen technologies. Building these industries and technologies in the United States will bring much needed jobs across the country. As part of the Inflation Reduction Act, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities, a nearly \$3-billion investment in climate-smart agricultural initiatives to spur advancements in regenerative agricultural practices that enhance soil fertility and store carbon, develop markets to promote sustainable commodity production



and organic farming, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support rural communities with a focus on enhancing social justice by targeting small and underserved producers. This is the single largest investment for climate-smart agriculture in history and has tremendous potential to catalyze innovation across the agricultural economy and directly assist farmers, ranchers, food production systems, forest and rangeland health, and outcomes for all creatures that occupy these lands.

The agricultural sector accounts for nearly 11 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) for the United States. Funding of projects will be tied to quantifiable targets for emission reductions and soil carbon storage by such practices as planting cover crops, reduced tillage, pasturing livestock, best management of forests and grazing lands, and promoting conservation programs. The opportunities will be spread across all types of agriculture including row cropping; specialty crops; dairy and



**Red-winged Blackbird above field planted with a cover crop.**  
<https://pasafarming.org/inflation-reduction-act-invests-40-billion-in-climate-smart-agriculture/>

beef cattle, and bison farms; rangelands; and forest and timber production. Federal money will be matched by private investment to capitalize on public/private partnerships and boost funding for more projects. Over 450 proposals have come from universities, farmer cooperatives, tribal, state and local governments, non-profits, conservation and environmental groups, small businesses, and large corporations. These have been pared down to 70 projects for the first phase and are estimated to cover 25 million acres of working lands and impact over 50,000 producers. This effort could help sequester as much as 50 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents over the lives of the projects and is equivalent to removing more than 10 million gasoline-powered passenger vehicles from the road for one year.

These initiatives give us hope. At long last, the United State is taking concrete action to combat climate change through wide-ranging programs and policies that have the potential to promote positive change across our agricultural lands and food production systems to improve human health and the environment.



**Blue Grosbeak  
by Fi Rust.**





## Let's Talk Turkey Vultures

My very first sighting of a Turkey Vulture (TV) occurred when I was sitting on top of Arthur's Rock in Lory State Park. I had binoculars and watched as a tiny dark spot in the sky grew ever larger; soon I realized I was staring at a TV heading right at me! It flew over my head at a low angle while I imagined it laughing to itself. Another humorous incident occurred when I was hiking with friends. A kettle (group) of TVs flew in and settled on nearby treetops. After the TVs all turned their heads and noticed us below them, they flew a short distance away to perch in treetops farther away from us; they intended to have a private gathering.

This large bird is named Turkey Vulture due to the adult bird having a red, featherless head like a Wild Turkey. Juveniles have black heads. Oddly, the TV is more closely related to Storks than Vultures. Another oddity is their Latin name, *Cathartes aura*, which literally means "cleanser (i.e., scavenger) gold." Turkey Vultures are oddly charming despite eating dead animals that they discover by scent. Of note, the TV has the largest olfactory system of all birds. Thus, their sense of smell is so keen that a TV can smell carrion from over a mile away due to ethyl mercaptan, a gas produced by the beginning of decay in dead prey. Turkey Vultures prefer car-

tion that is between 12 and 24 hours old. They feed by thrusting their featherless heads and necks into body cavities of dead, rotting creatures. Not having feathers on their heads and neck makes it much easier to clean off the carrion from those areas after feeding. Beware:



Turkey Vultures by Lou Orr,

TVs protect themselves when threatened by regurgitating vile smelling, partially digested meat. They sunbathe as a cleansing ritual; the ultraviolet rays kill the bacteria left on their bodies from their most recent carrion meal. They roost communally in trees at night and emerge in the morning by circling upward to soar in the morning.

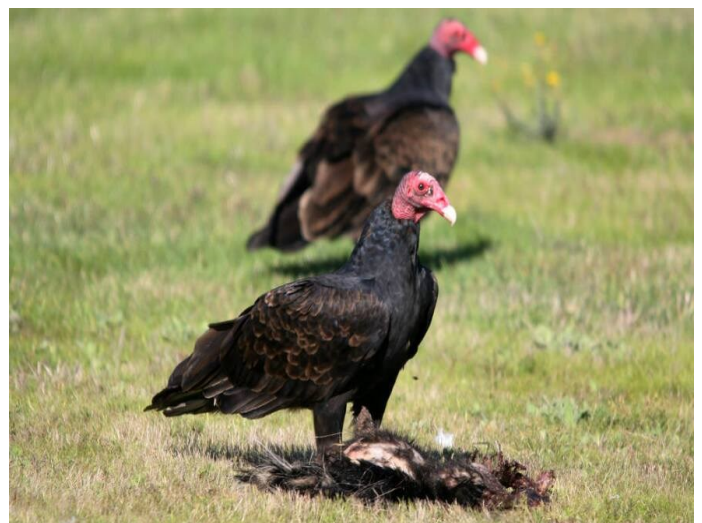
Turkey Vultures look similar to Old World Vultures due to convergent evolution. The TV's feet are like a chicken's; however, its strong beak can

tear through tough animal hide. It lacks a syrinx (vocal organ) so it can only hiss or grunt. Oddly, the TV is the only scavenger bird that cannot kill its own prey. Another oddity is that the parents "nest" in a slight impression on the ground or inside a cave. The parents usually produce two offspring. A TV can travel up to two hundred miles in a day. Their range is from Southern Canada to South America. Local TVs migrate to the southern United States for the winter. We in Colorado are very fortunate to host these warm season visitors.

### FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Mary Beck	Cheryl Orwig
Lisa Carp	Joyce Owens
Barbara Case	Connie Sheridan
Nancy Frederick	Sheila Webber
Les Gehman	Peter Weckesser
Ruth Grant	Paul West
Kimberlee D. LaMothe	Emil Yappert

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.



Turkey Vultures with carrion from Radio WCAL.



## Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free (unless otherwise noted) and 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 occasionally are unavoidable. One week before a scheduled 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 register. Attendance currently is limited to a maximum of 12 individuals. Waitlisted individuals for a trip will be sent a link for the next available trip before registration is open to the public. Bobcat Ridge surveys do not require registration.

**Nov. 5, Saturday, Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area.** Leader: Sirena Brownlee. Join Sirena for a walk on Cattail Flats Trail to view late migrating and resident 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 10 a.m. in the parking lot. Sign up using information listed above.

**Nov. 13, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com) or 970-402-1292. The survey looks at bird populations and helps local scientists better understand bird dynamics. The little more than four-mile hike covers moderate to flat terrain. No registration required and there is no participation limit, but please email or text Denise that you plan to attend. Meet at 7 a.m. in Bobcat Ridge Parking lot.

**Nov. 20, Sunday, City Park and Sheldon Lake.** Leader: Nolan Bunting. Join Nolan for an exploratory walk to see what lives in our backyards. Plan for a 1- to 2-mile hike with plenty of stops to quietly observe nature. All levels are encouraged. Plan to arrive around 9 a.m. Register with information listed above. Parking

locations will be sent to those registered.

Interested in leading a Birding Trip? Have an idea for a trip? Email [nbunting@rams.colostate.edu](mailto:nbunting@rams.colostate.edu) if you would like to volunteer or suggest a trip.



Horned Lark by Evan Barrientos.

## Past Field Trips

**Sept. 17, CSU Environmental Learning Center.** A wonderful celebration of birds was found throughout the Poudre Important Bird Area (IBA). This included the sighting of numerous migrating waterfowl (American Wigeons and Mallards), an Orange-crowned Warbler, and a

few other species. I recommend this hike to learn how the IBA has affected birds in the county, and the migrants that visit us.

**Sept. 18., Timnath Reservoir.** Timnath Reservoir is a hotspot for fall migrating shorebirds and waterfowl, and this trip was one that truly demonstrated that. Twenty-nine species of birds were seen on this trip, including a possible Pectoral Sandpiper, Herring Gull, and a Horned Lark. This is definitely one of the hotspots for birding.

## Species Highlight

To celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Great Backyard Bird Count, we are highlighting a bird species in every newsletter this year, as well as on Facebook and Instagram.

This month's highlight is the Redhead. Buying a Duck Stamp, which all waterfowl hunters must do, is one of the most important contributors to bird conservation around the United States. The purchasing of Duck Stamps is the largest funding source for bird conservation, totaling close to \$40 million annually. The proceeds from the Duck Stamp goes directly into conservation programs for migrating birds around the United States through land acquisition for National Wildlife Refuges. Nearly every National Wildlife Refuge was built using funding from these stamps. So, this season, buy yourself

and your friends a Duck Stamp, and perhaps a Colorado Habitat Stamp to support conservation.

You can find more information here for the Duck Stamp: <https://www.fws.gov/program/federal-duck-stamp/what-we-do>.



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).