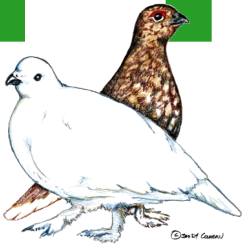


PTARMIGAN



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.

December 2022

Volume 54, Issue 9

FCAS Hosts

Book Sale/Member Potluck and Slideshow

Thursday, December 8

Book Sale, 6:30 p.m.; Potluck, 6:45; Announcements, 7:15; Member Slideshow, 7:30

Door Prize Drawing

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

This program will also be accessible online using Zoom

Enter the following link at 7 p.m. to join the meeting virtually:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84660031888>

The December member potluck and slideshow is back! And to add to the festivities this year we are holding a donated book sale as a fundraiser — great books at appealing “cheep” prices!

For the potluck, please bring a dish to share with serving utensils and your own place setting. We will provide beverages. There will be time to browse the books starting at 6:30 p.m. and food will be available beginning at 6:45.

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 the laptop and technology to project your photos.

Join us on Dec. 8 at the Fort Collins Senior Center to find some book bargains, enjoy good food, and be entertained by member photos that will awe you! There also will be a door prize drawing for those present. The public is welcomed.

An owl reading “The Owl Under a Full Moon.” From Wikimedia Commons.

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.

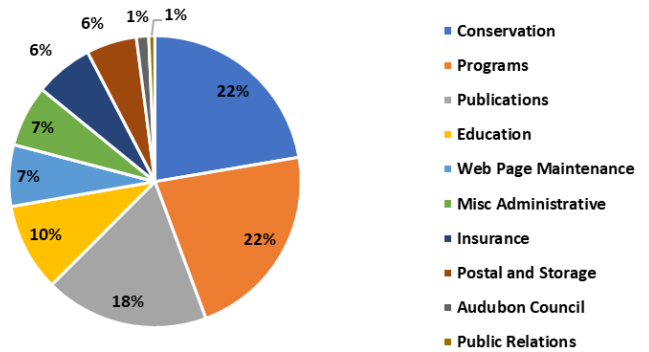
*Happy
Holidays
from
FCAS*



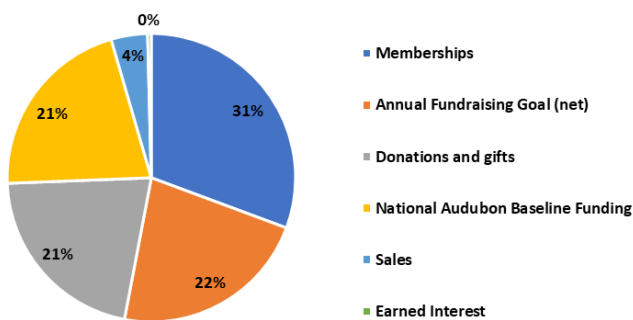
In keeping with our bylaws, the FCAS Board agreed in November on a proposed annual budget for our 2023 operations. Members can vote on whether or not to approve the budget at our annual meeting in January.

The charts summarize our proposed expenses and revenues for 2023 by category. (A complete budget proposal with details on expenses and revenues is available to any member upon request.) The proposed budget represents a 13 percent increase in budgeted expenditures compared to 2022. Most of the projected increase in expendi-

FCAS 2023 Proposed Budget Expenditures = \$14,677



Proposed FCAS 2023 Budget Revenue = \$14,677



tures is due to increases in our conservation and education activities. We will start the year with bigger goals for donations and for our annual fundraiser than in past years, but the Board is confident we can hit our targeted revenues, so we are not proposing any increase to membership dues.

Nominating Committee Report

In October, the FCAS Board of Directors appointed a nominating committee, consisting of Andrew Monson, Barb Patterson, and John Shenot, to identify candidates to serve as officers and directors on the 2023 Board. The president serves a two-year term while all other board members serve one-year terms. In keeping with our bylaws, the nominating committee announces the following slate of recommended candidates to be officially nominated at our January membership meeting: President, John Shenot; President-Elect, none (seeking a volunteer); Vice-President, Liz Pruessner; Treasurer, Joe Polazzi; Secretary, Kim Vercimak; Directors-at-Large (up to 6 positions to fill), Rachel Belouin, Jay Breidt, Alan Godwin, Kit Gray, and Justin Hollis (seeking one volunteer).

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.

The nominating committee also identified recommended candidates to chair our standing committees in 2023. Committee chairs are not elected; rather, they are appointed by the president with the consent of the Board. The recommended candidates are: Conservation, Ellie Harrison; Membership, Harry Rose; Education, Sheila Webber; Finance, none (seeking a volunteer); Programs, none (seeking a volunteer); Field Trips, Nolan Bunting; Publications, Joe Webber; Public Relations, Andrew Monson; Hospitality, Cassie Cranmore.

If you would like to fill one of the vacancies or serve as a committee member, please contact any of our current board members or nominees.

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www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

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



30 by 30



#Love30X30

The 30-by-30 initiative sets the goal of preserving 30 percent of the planet by 2030. The idea was proposed in 2019 in a *Science Advances* article titled, "A Global Deal for Nature: Guiding Principles, Milestones, and Targets," which called for expanding nature conservation efforts to mitigate climate change. This goal includes lands and waters as all global ecosystems are vital to species survival and habitat preservation. The main components of the initiative are: protect, biodiversity, connectivity, and conserve. Protecting 30 percent of the world's terrestrial and marine habitats gives us the best chance of preserving biodiversity. Connectivity is the strategy to establish corridors connecting existing preserved areas across the planet to form a wide network of protected habitat, and giving wildlife room to migrate and reach other populations. Isolated patches of preserved land and national parks are much less valuable for species viability than large swaths of interconnected habitat.

The United States supports this initiative, and the Biden administration made it an official policy in 2021 as part of an executive order with sweeping plans to combat climate change. The "Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful" plan lays out clear principles to move the country forward on the 30-by-30 goal: 1) pursue a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation, 2) conserve America's lands and waters for the benefit of all people, 3) support locally led and locally designed conservation efforts, 4) honor tribal sovereignty and support the priorities of tribal nations, 5) pursue conservation and restoration approaches that create jobs and support healthy communities, 6) honor private property rights and support the voluntary stewardship efforts of private landowners and fishers, 7) use science as a guide, and 8) build on existing tools and strategies with an emphasis on flexibility and adaptive approaches. It calls for an annual progress report updating con-

servation and restoration efforts, including the conditions of fish and wildlife habitats and populations.

On the international front, efforts have gained momentum from the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm al Sheikh, Egypt. A total of 112 nations affirmed support for conserving at least 30 percent of earth's land and oceans by the year 2030 to stem the loss of biodiversity and ease the effect of



Sandhill Cranes. Photo from USFWS.

climate change. There is clear recognition that combating climate change is inextricably linked with preserving ecosystems, stemming habitat loss, supporting biodiversity, and improving the health of wildlife and humans alike. The smaller countries of the world are disproportionately affected by climate change and have less resource to pay for mitigation and conservation efforts. The U.S. State Department has proposed a new funding stream through a partnership with philanthropies and large companies (Rockefeller Foundation, Bezos Earth Fund, PepsiCo, and Microsoft) to provide financing in developing countries for clean energy and conservation strategies. The 30-by-30 initiative is another way to bring the world together in a combined effort to preserve the health of our beautiful planet.

It's Time to Renew Your Membership

It is time to renew your annual membership. FCAS chapter memberships run for the calendar year from January through December. Dues are \$20 to receive the *Ptarmigan* electronically or \$30 for a printed copy through the mail. Please use the form on the back page of the newsletter to renew by mail or renew at a program meeting. You also can renew online at our website: www.fortcollinsaudubon.org. Remember, your membership and contributions are tax deductible, and help make our programs possible.



Renew

FCAS welcomes new and renewing members. Your support makes our programs and conservation efforts possible and helps us achieve our mission of connecting people to the natural world.

Kerstin Braun
Elizabeth Knees
Kaitlyn Parkins

David Robertson
David Shurna
Julianna Woolums



Adapt-a-Ptarmigan

I think the ptarmigan should be the poster child for adaptations to winter. The White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucura*) is the only one living in Colorado and is found on slopes and ridges above the tree line. The



Breeding male. Photo from CPW.org.

three major problems they face in winter are heat loss, water loss, and food scarcity. But they have developed a wide range of morphological, physiological, and behavioral adaptations to get them through the winter.

Their morphological, or physical and structural, characteristics are feathered nostrils and legs that help prevent heat loss, and feathered feet that function as snowshoes (In Latin, *Lagopus* means a foot resembling a hare). An internal or physiological adaptation is a large crop that acts like a food storage container that helps in times of scarce food. Their droppings are dry to minimize body heat and water loss. Their behavior also changes to survive the cold weather. They avoid flight and burrow into the snow, flying directly into a snowbank to avoid leaving footprints for predators. The ptarmigan is the only member of the grouse family that changes its plumage from summer brown to winter white to avoid predation.

Unlike many winter residents of the alpine and arctic areas, ptarmigan do not need a high energy fatty diet to sustain them through the cold winter. The adults are strictly vegetarians, eating the tips of shrubs protruding through the snow in winter. And because of their

low metabolism they do not need as much food to power through the harsh conditions. Studies in Colorado even show that they gain weight on their diet of shrubs by seeking out stands of willow just high enough for them to reach.

In 2010, Colorado Parks and Wildlife responded to a request to have the bird listed as threatened. After completing a thorough study, in 2018 it was determined that the population of ptarmigan are holding steady and do not need special protections under the federal En-



Breeding female. Photo from Macaulay Library.

dangered Species Act. Further study is recommended due to continuing pressure from changing climate and human disturbance. Agencies should work together to educate the public, limit disturbance in the alpine, and manage this iconic species for future generations.

If you are lucky enough to see a ptarmigan when you are skiing or snowshoeing this winter, take a picture and submit it to iNaturalist or eBird with the location, date, and time to help scientists learn more about this highly adaptable and unique bird!

Book Sale

FCAS is holding a book sale at our December slideshow and potluck, featuring bird and nature guidebooks and some artwork. Come early to browse the selections. The sale starts at 6:30 p.m. and we welcome cash or checks — please, no credit cards.



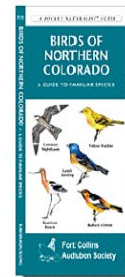
FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

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



The 123rd Christmas Bird Count



The 123rd 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 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. To help

bolster this year's involvement, FCAS will not host December field trips aside from the Bobcat Ridge Survey.

Locations, dates, and contact information for the CBC follows. Contact the complier for more information.

Pawnee Grasslands: Complier Kelly Ormesher, kbormesher@msn.com. Dates for the Pawnee CBC were not decided by publication time, but the survey will include the areas of Crow Valley, Nunn, Stoneham, and Pawnee Buttes.

Fort Collins: Dec. 17, Complier Thomas Hall, redbear44@msn.com.

Rawhide Energy Station: Complier Douglas Kibbe: dpkibbe@msn.com or 303-910-9476. Contact complier for date.

Loveland: Jan. 1, Complier Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com and Nick Komar, quetzal65@comcast.net.

Rocky Mountain National Park: Jan 2, Complier Scott Rashid: pygmyowl@frii.com or 970-227-9425.

Traveling for the holidays? Visit this link to find CBCs in your travel location. <https://audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ac275eeb01434cedb1c5dcd0fd3fc7b4>

Happy holidays and happy birding to all!

Species Highlight

Over the past year, we have highlighted a species every month in honor of the 25th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. This is our final entry and what an amazing year it's been, full of fantastic birds and field trips. For our last bird, we thought long and hard about what to use. At first, we considered either the robin, a Christmas symbol in Europe, or perhaps the Mountain Chickadee, one of the first official birds to be listed in the 1900 Colorado CBC. Ultimately, we decided on one dear to the



White-tailed Ptarmigan. Photo from National Park Service.

hearts of many FCAS members: the White-tailed Ptarmigan.

This member of the Phasianidae family is found at elevations exceeding 14,000 feet. Living in the high alpine tundra, this incredible bird is famous for changing colors from brown in the summer to white in the winter. Much like other

Galliformes, they often display to attract a mate. Strutting around with their fantastic red-eye combs, males defend a small territory and attract females by spreading their tails and bowing.

Field Trips

Dec. 11, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, 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 7:30 a.m. in Bobcat Ridge parking lot.

Past Field Trip

John Shenot led a group around Douglas Reservoir on Oct. 27. The birding may not have been the best, but the sound of flying Sandhill Cranes made it quite an experience. The group saw 19 bird species, including a massive raft of Common Mergansers and a Townsend's Solitaire.



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
Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email | \$ 20 | Name: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New or renewing FCAS Chapter Member
Receive the FCAS <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail | \$ 30 | Address: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime FCAS Chapter Member
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
(natural history education grants) | \$ ____ | Email: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New NAS member
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
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.