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Northern Colorado Bird Alliance

P.O. Box 271968·Fort Collins,CO·80527-1968·www.nocobirdalliance.org

Promoting the appreciation, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife through education, participation, stewardship, and advocacy.

November 2026 **Volume 58, Issue 8**

Northern Colorado Bird Alliance Hosts PhD Candidate Erica Robertson presenting: "The Bird Genoscape Project and our work on Rosy-Finches."

Thursday, November 12

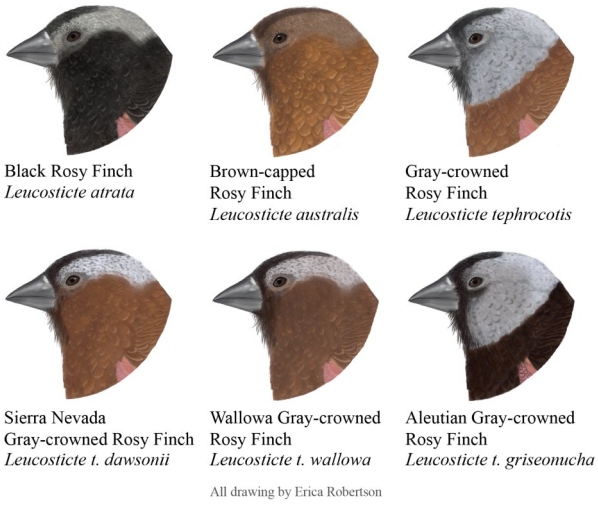
Social time with Refreshments: 7 p.m.; Announcements: 7:20; Presentation: 7:30

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

This program will be online via Zoom. Enter the following at 7 p.m. to join the meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81966855767

In this talk, Erica Robertson will cover some background about the Bird Genoscape Project and the work they do understanding and protecting migratory species. Following this background she will discuss the results of the ongoing project on Rosy-Finches. This work is a collaboration with scientists from University of California Santa Cruz and the University of Texas at Austin among others. They have worked at both a species level and a complex level to understand the phylogeny of this group, how they are adapted to climate change, and to try and understand how climate change might impact them in the future. Erica plans to finish by outlining her final chapter and provide some preliminary results on how Brown-capped Rosy-Finches have adapted to climate change over the last 100 years.



Erica Robertson is a PhD candidate at Colorado State University. Her work focuses on understanding how species are adapted to their local environments to better predict how they'll respond to future climates. When she decided to go to graduate school she knew she wanted to focus on conservation genomics, and she wanted to work on Rosy-Finches. She got her dream position at CSU in 2022 and since then has worked on Rosy- Finches (and some other species).

Join us on November 12 for this informative program that is free and open to the public.

Northern Colorado Bird Alliance 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 Northern Colorado Bird Alliance. 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.nocobirdalliance.org.

President's Corner

by John Shenot

Last month, we appointed three members to a Nominations Committee that will be responsible for recruiting candidates to serve on our Board of Directors in 2027. The committee members are Lori Pivonka, Barb Patterson, and me. We have already identified many willing and qualified candidates to serve as officers, directors, and standing committee chairs, but we are still looking to fill at least four vacancies: one Director-at-Large, and chairpersons for our Publications, Finance, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committees.

All these positions are important to the success of our chapter, but I think our highest priority is to find a new DEI committee chair. The best way for our chapter to grow and have a greater positive impact in our community is to diversify our membership and leadership, and actively promote inclusion and equity in all Bird Alliance activities. This committee is focused on just that. If that kind of work excites you, or you know someone who might be interested, please speak up.

Directors-at-Large serve on the Board of Directors and contribute to all decisions made by the board, but have no specified duties. Our Finance Committee Chair is responsible for managing our investments (currently, this consists entirely of certificates of deposit) and compiling our annual budget. The primary responsibility of the Publications Committee Chair is to ensure that our monthly newsletter is published. This involves coordinating the effort of multiple authors of articles, our editor, and proofing. We have limped through past years with either or both of those committee chairs vacant, but it would be great to find enthusiastic new volunteers.



Send an email to contact@nocobirdalliance.org or contact any member of the Nominations Committee to learn more about volunteering for the Board of Directors generally, or to learn about any of the specific vacancies mentioned above. You won't be pressured to volunteer, but if you do, experienced board members will do what we can to help you be successful.



Brewer's Sparrow by John Shenot.

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Visit us on Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/NoCoBirdAlliance

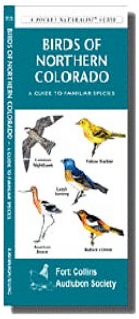
Pocket Guide to Local Birds

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



Conservation Corner

by Nan Eckardt

Bird Safe NoCo: Protecting Birds from Window Collisions in Northern Colorado

Did you know that window collisions are a problem for birds in Northern Colorado? I sure didn't! You might think, as I did, that it is mainly a problem around tall buildings, and we don't have tall buildings here. In fact, residential homes and low-rise buildings are to blame for the vast majority of window strikes due to sheer numbers. There are over 120 million residential homes and tens of millions of low-rise buildings in the United States compared to a much smaller number of tall buildings.



From: https://www.instagram.com/p/DE2jVdux5fl/.

It is estimated that well over one billion birds die each year from window strikes in the United States. Birds fly into windows because they can't see the glass and are attracted by reflections showing what appears to be their natural habitat: green trees, shrubs, and sky. Even birds that seem fine and fly off after hitting glass often die later of internal injuries. Bird strikes can happen any time of year, but occur mostly during spring (March – April) and fall (August – November) migration seasons.

The good news is that window strikes are preventable! There are three considerations for bird-safe buildings: 1) Glass. Consider bird-friendly window treatments, which must be applied correctly to be effective. Single hawk silhouettes or widely spaced decals do not cover enough glass to trick birds. To effectively break up the reflection, vertical tape strips, dots, or multiple decals must be applied to the outside glass surface, spaced no more than two inches apart vertically or four inches apart horizontally. Purchase or make your own elegant strips of parachute cord https://www.birdsavers.com/). 2) Lights. Most birds migrate at night, and they need dark skies. Birds become disoriented by and attracted to artificial lights and lit structures at night. Turn off or dim outdoor lights at night. If outside lighting is necessary, use down-shielded lights with motion sensors and timers. Close curtains and blinds at night to prevent light spill from the inside out. 3) Attractants. Bird feeders and bird baths attract birds to fly close to windows. Place bird feeders within three feet of windows to prevent birds from building up enough momentum for a fatal collision. Prioritize window treatments and lights out in areas closest to bird feeders and bird baths.



From: https://birdsafe.ca/window-options/.

The Northern Colorado Bird Alliance is developing a program to educate our community about bird window collisions and mitigation techniques, and to help residents and building owners install materials to make their windows bird-safe. As a first step, we will soon release a survey to gather data on Northern Colorado bird strikes and begin educating the local community. Contact John Shenot (president@nocobirdalliance.org) with questions about the program.



Anti-collision stickers from eBay.com.

Northern Colorado Bird Alliance Welcomes New and Renewing Members



Derek Atkinson
Nikki Berlin
Ann Donoghue
Sarah Engebrecht
Patricia Ewert
Janet Holley
Connie Ohlson
Dillan Prince
Susan Roscoe
Ann Seymour
Linda Squires
Mary Stanley Weston

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.

Education Corner — by Sheila Webber

Fall Birding on the Pawnee

Many people head to the mountains in the fall for some spectacular leaf peeping and birding. But have you considered a trip out to the Pawnee National Grasslands? I personally love the fall colors there. They may be a bit more subtle, but the colors are beautiful on the prairie. This special place whispers of a vast shortgrass prairie ecosystem that once covered almost half of the state.

The birds that call this grassland home are so special, and it is a wonder to see how they survive and thrive here. From the majestic Golden Eagle to the diminutive Horned Lark, birds make their living in the wide-open spaces. Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon and Rough-legged Hawk call the prairie home in the late fall and winter, and raptors are ever present on the Pawnee.



Western Meadowlark by Joseph Webber.

Colorado's state bird, the Lark Bunting, can be found on the wind-swept Pawnee in flocks and quite often along the roadways. They are migratory, spending the winter months in the southwest and into Mexico, but can still be found in smaller numbers on the Pawnee into November.

Horned Larks can be found here year-round, as they are resident or short distance migrants. Listen for their high-pitched tinkling song. They are often heard before they are spotted as they tend to be well-camouflaged.

Longspurs — Thick-billed, Chestnut-collared, and Lapland— are always fun to look for while driving the dirt roads. Chestnut-collared Longspur leave their breeding grounds on the Pawnee (and further north) starting in early September, with the peak migration occurring between mid-September to early October. Some individuals may linger until mid-November, however. Lapland Longspur breed in the high arctic and head south to overwinter, arriving at the wintering grounds between mid-September to mid-November.



Chestnut-collared Longspur by Joseph Webber.

There is a breeding population of Thick-billed Longspur that extends north from central Colorado. Early to mid-October is usually when this species heads for wintering grounds in Texas and Mexico.

Sparrows found in the fall and winter include White-crowned, American Tree, and Song Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Junco. Of these species, the Song Sparrow is resident with the others migrating here to spend a snowy winter. Western Meadowlark is a beautiful resident that can be found here year-round.

Another species that breeds in the far north and winters on the Pawnee is the Northern Shrike. This pint-sized predator has the habit of skewering prey on thorns or barbed wire, so look along the fence lines for signs of this bird, even if you don't get a glimpse of the culprit.

The Pawnee is always great for birding, and when the weather is good, consider checking it out for fall and winter birding.

It's Time to Renew Your Membership



Annual Northern Colorado Bird Alliance chapter memberships run 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: https://nocobirdalliance.org/. Remember, your membership and contributions are tax deductible, and help make our programs possible. If you renewed September – December 2026, your membership is good through January 2028. Thank you to all those who have already renewed. We appreciate your support!



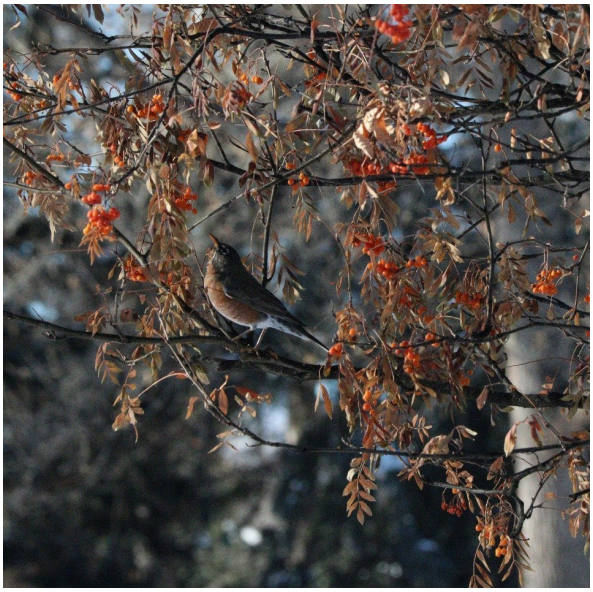
Lark Bunting by Doug Swartz.

Field Trips

All field trips are free and open to the public. Anyone at any experience level is welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and/or spotting scopes. Changes to dates, meeting times, locations, and trip leaders are occasionally unavoidable. To register for any trip, please see posts at ***https://www.facebook.com/NoCoBirdAlliance*** *or member emails sent out 1-2 weeks in advance of each trip. When announced, links will also be posted to the linktree at* ***linktr.ee/nocobirdalliance****. Attendance may be limited. With questions, suggestions, or interest in leading trips (all you need is a desire to share your love of birds and/or nature!), please email fieldtrips@nocobirdalliance.org.*

Nov. 8, 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 with some steep sections. No registration required and there is no participation limit, but please email or text Denise that you plan to attend. Meet at 8 a.m. in Bobcat Ridge parking lot. Signup not required for Bobcat Ridge, but please email Denise. The trip may be cancelled, rescheduled or relocated if trails are closed.

Nov. 13, Friday, Accessible Walk at Sheldon Lake. Leaders: Sheila Webber, education@nocobirdalliance.org, and Amy Roush. The walk takes place 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This is a bird outing around Sheldon Lake in City Park to discover resident and migrating birds. This outing is specifically designed to invite people with physical disabilities or other access needs and runs along a smooth, concrete path. Please note that this walk is particularly weather-dependent and we will cancel 24 hours in advance if rain or snow is forecast. The signup link will be shared through social media and email to members, but if this walk is of interest to you, reach out to education@nocobirdalliance.org or fieldtrips@nocobirdalliance.org.



American Robin from the High Plains Environmental Center.

Nov. 15, Sunday, Gateway Natural Area. Leader: Ryan Twedt, twedt@outlook.com. The walk will start at 9 a.m. This location does require an $8 permit for each car or other mode of transport. Visitors also can check out a free Gateway Natural Area annual pass for up to one week from the Poudre River Library District and Wellington Public Library. A signup for Gateway will be sent out about a week in advance.

Nov. 22, Sunday, Fossil Creek Reservoir. Leader: Sirena Brownlee, sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com. With enough demand, this walk may be increased up to 30 people with an additional trip leader. Plan for a 2-mile walk on the trails. All levels are welcome and a spotting scope will be available. This is a great location for a wide variety of waterfowl and grassland birds. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot. A signup for Fossil Creek Reservoir will be sent out about a week in advance.

Nov. 22, Sunday, Walk in Pawnee Grasslands. Leader: Nolan Bunting, 907-299-4625. Join us as we walk one of the many trails present on Pawnee National Grassland (NG). We will walk from the Crow Valley Campground for the first hour, then drive around the northern portion of the Pawnee NG bird tour. It is a great chance for some of our wintering prairie birds like Townsend's Solitaire, Horned Lark, Prairie Falcon, Northern Shrike, and possibly Pine Siskin, depending on the cone quality. We also will discuss some of the natural history of the Pawnee area. The trip will begin at 8 a.m. at the Crow Valley Campground. Carpooling is encouraged. Trails in this area may be uneven or not maintained. A signup for Pawnee will be sent out about a week in advance.

First Saturday of the Month: Recurring Bird Banding and Survey at the High Plains Environmental Center (HPEC). Leaders: Scott Rashid (bird banding at 9 a.m.), Sheila or Joseph Webber (survey walk starting at 10 a.m.). Scott shares his extensive knowledge of bird banding data and demonstrates ethical bird banding practices, and Sheila or Joseph leads a survey walk around Equalizer Reservoir, which generally lasts until about noon. This is a collaboration between the High Plains Environmental Center, Scott Rashid/Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute, and the Northern Colorado Bird Alliance, and registration is through HPEC by donation: tinyurl.com/HPECbirdbanding. This event does not occur in January or July and may be cancelled due to weather or other circumstances. Anyone who is registered will be notified of cancellation.

Northern Colorado Bird Alliance
PO Box 271968
Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968


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Membership Application

Join Northern Colorado Bird Alliance (the chapter), National Audubon Society (NAS), or both.

☐ New or renewing chapter member $ 20
Receive the *Ptarmigan* by email

☐ New or renewing chapter member $ 30
Receive the *Ptarmigan* by mail

☐ Lifetime chapter member $750
Receive *Ptarmigan* by mail or email

☐ Additional support for chapter programs $___

☐ Additional support for Alex Cringan Fund $___
(natural history education grants)

☐ New NAS member $ 20
Receive the NAS *Audubon* by mail

☐ Renewing NAS member $ 35
Receive the NAS *Audubon* by mail

Total Enclosed: $___

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____State:_____Zip:_____

Phone:_____

Email:_____

May we send you chapter email alerts if updates occur for field trips, programs, etc.? Yes or No

May we contact you for volunteer activities such as helping at events or contacting legislators on important issues? Yes or No

Make tax-exempt checks payable to Northern Colorado Bird Alliance and mail this form to Northern Colorado Bird Alliance, 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.nocobirdalliance.org**.