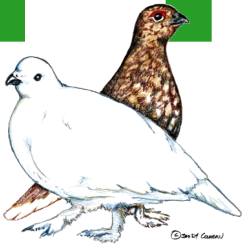


PTARMIGAN



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.

May 2021

Volume 52, Issue 5

FCAS Hosts

Michael Hughes, Fort Collins District Forester

Presenting: "Connecting with the Colorado State Forest Service"

Thursday, May 13

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/87106049772>

The year 2020 was an historic wildfire year, with two of Colorado's largest wildfires occurring right in our Northern Colorado communities. Join Fort Collins District Forester Michael Hughes, to learn more about the Colorado State Forest Service. Its mission is to achieve stewardship of Colorado's diverse forest envi-



East Troublesome fire by Zach Wehr.

Forest Service, living with wildfire, forest management, and restoring Colorado's forests.

Michael Hughes has been a field forester for over 35 years, the last 30 with the Colorado State Forest Service.

Audubon members and the public all are welcomed to

ronments for the benefit of present and future generations. This presentation will highlight the work of the join into this virtual program on May 13.

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.

By tradition, FCAS does not publish a newsletter in June, July, or August. It's been that way since before I joined the organization, and this year will be no different. So, since this will be the last newsletter you receive before September, I want to preview what we have planned for the summer and explain how you can stay connected.

First, the Board of Directors will continue to meet monthly throughout the summer to take care of chapter business and plan our fall activities. Second, FCAS will be making a presentation at the 2021 Poudre River Festival on how birds use the Poudre River. Third, we are working on plans for participating in additional educational events in our community and creating some cool, new educational materials. Fourth, we'll continue to monitor pending and proposed actions by national, state, and local government agencies, and we'll speak up for our members any time it's appropriate. And fifth, we're hoping to be able to resume field trips sometime this summer. It could be a very busy summer, indeed!

Since we won't be publishing a newsletter for a few months, but will be doing all those things, you may be wondering how you—our members—will know what's going on. The answer is to follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/fcaudubon>). We'll send emails to the members for whom

we have email addresses if anything important happens, but social media tools are our primary means of communicating with members (and non-member "friends") on routine matters in the summertime. If we need your help on a conservation issue, we'll put something on Facebook and Instagram. Or if you want to bring an issue to our attention, you can leave us a message on either platform. If we are able to schedule a field trip or want you to know about an interesting community event, that's where we'll announce it. I hope you'll join the hundreds of followers we already have on these social media platforms. Have a great summer!



Keep in touch
with FCAS

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Visit us on Facebook:

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

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Nancy Hitchins

Neil Holstein

Charles Kopp

Charles & Christina Mild

Gary Robinson

Janet Rubinstein

Eileen Scholl

Jayne Strass

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.



Song Sparrow by Ron Harden.



Plastic Pollution—Working Toward Solutions

Good news! Voters in Fort Collins passed the plastic bag ban ordinance by nearly 59 percent in the April election. It is a positive move in the right direction after repeated attempts in the past from both citizen and city council-initiated ballot measures and resolutions. Great to see such a large margin of support for a measure that struggled in previous elections. It demonstrates a shift in the thinking of the community and gives hope for more progress in the work of reducing plastic pollution. The ordinance will take effect in May 2022 and only includes large grocery stores (at least 10,000 square feet). The 2022 implementation

will give time to plan for a successful roll-out. Plastic bags will no longer be provided at large grocery stores and paper bags will have a 12-cent fee. Low-income residents are exempt from the fee for paper bags and fees will pay for reusable bags to be supplied at no cost for those households.

Efforts in the Colorado Legislature could bring even more change statewide. There are proposals to prohibit disposable plastic bags from nearly all retail stores and restaurants, along with a 10-cent fee for paper/reusable bags and to eliminate polystyrene foam containers (Styrofoam) for take-out food. Other legislation seeks a 0.3-cent fee on plastic food packaging that would fund recycling and composting programs. This is a bipartisan proposal that has the support of a large influential lobbying group, the American Chemical Council. Any legislation passed at the state level would strengthen community efforts and not allow cities to do less than statewide standards. Persistence and demand by citizens for action are the

keys to instituting real change.

The goal of these measures is to keep plastic waste out of landfills and waterways. The accumulation of

microplastics in the environment has reached every part of the globe and is having far reaching health effects for all life on the planet. Microplastics are in the soil, air, and waterways, including our drinking water. The problem is depressing and can seem insurmountable, but every action taken builds momentum. The COVID pandemic certainly influenced the temporary increase of plastic waste

from carry-out food, but as we emerge from the pan-

demic, there is much we can do. Eliminating plastic at the source is part of the solution and we can participate by engaging with businesses as we shop. Carry reusable bags and request sustainable packaging for our take-out food; and say no to plastic straws, utensils, and water bottles. Take a pledge to reduce plastic in your home

([https://www.therusticelk.com/30-ways-to-eliminate-](https://www.therusticelk.com/30-ways-to-eliminate-plastic-from-your-life)

[plastic-from-your-life](https://www.therusticelk.com/30-ways-to-eliminate-plastic-from-your-life)).

Creativity and innovation are alive and well in companies around the world to address the cleanup side of the issue. New technologies to clean plastics from the oceans and rivers are being developed, such as the passive u-shaped collector that catches floating plastic using ocean currents. The Ocean Cleanup project has a goal to clean up 50 percent of the plastic in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch every five years and to intercept 80 percent of plastics in rivers



OceanCleanup's passive device to capture floating plastic in the ocean. From: <https://theoceancleanup.com>.



The Great Pacific Garbage Patch from <https://www.reddit.com>.

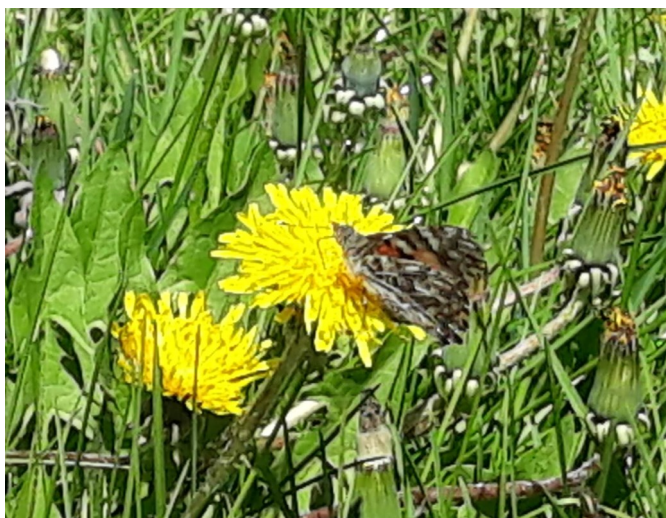
before it reaches the oceans (<https://theoceancleanup.com>).



Dandelions: What the Birds, Butterflies, and Bees Know

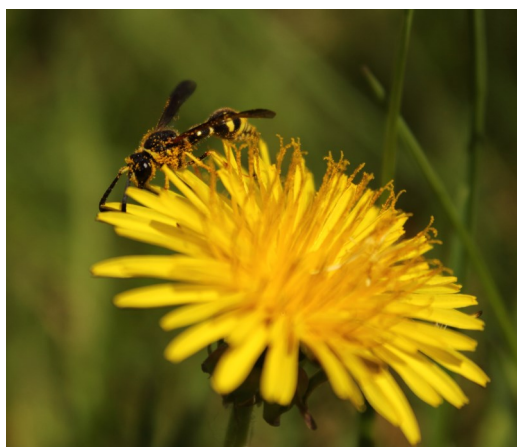
As I look out my window at the much-needed snow in the front yard, I am excited about the project that awaits. I will be converting our small patch of Kentucky Blue Grass to native plants that will feed our pollinators.

I think back to last April when arriving home from work, I witnessed a dozen Painted Ladies flitting around the dandelions sprinkled throughout the yard.



Painted Lady on dandelion by Sheila Webber.

Another morning that same month, my husband pointed out a Painted Lady that had been perched on a dandelion for over fifteen minutes. Since an early frost killed the flowers on our crab apple tree, I am grateful that these early-blooming dandelions provided food for these beautiful insects. I have seen at least seven species of bees, five beetle species, and many other insects on the dandelion flowers. When they go to seed, finches love to eat them. Hummingbirds will use dandelion fluff to line their nests.



Mason Wasp on dandelion
by Joseph Webber.

Nurturing our insect population is vital to our bird population. Over 96 percent of terrestrial bird species eat insects at some point in their life cycle. At a native plant conference I

attended a few years ago, the sunflower was called “the bug bar.” This is quite apparent with the sunflowers that grow in the yard. Dandelions are in the sunflower family and provide many nutrients to insects as well.

Alpine Dandelion (*Taraxacum ceratophorum*) usually found in high mountain regions is one of several species of dandelion native to North America. Common dandelions, which dominate lower elevations, were introduced by European settlers to grow in gardens for food and medicinal purposes. The benefits of dandelions to humans and wildlife are impressive. The leaves are eaten by wildlife and humans, and are full of nutrients such as vitamins K and A. The root can be used to make tea and even a coffee substitute. The flowers are edible as well. Use them as a desert garnish, or to make dandelion wine. There are a slew of websites you can visit to get information on how to use this amazing



Bee on dandelion by Sheila Webber.

herb. Of course, choose dandelions that are free of harmful chemicals such as pesticides and fertilizers. Pesticides and herbicides cause the death of seven million wild birds annually.

The native plants soon to fill the front yard will be chosen for their benefits to the wildlife I hope to feed. One aspect of this will be various bloom times. Early bloomers, mid-summer bloomers, and fall bloomers will benefit species all through the growing season. Audubon Rockies website is a valuable tool I will be tapping into for help with planning my native garden. While I will have early-blooming native plants, I will still make room for the beneficial dandelion.



Upcoming FCAS Education Projects

Education is at the forefront of our chapter's goals. Fort Collins Audubon Society is excited about the projects that are happening this year. We are happy to engage with the community on these events, while continuing safety measures as we work toward getting back to our normal programming. Consider participating in the following programs:

Poudre River Festival: We will present a virtual program again this year on May 7 at noon, continuing the theme of last year's program about the Poudre River Important Bird Area to discuss how birds use this vital ecosystem.



Mindful Birding: FCAS is partnering with UCHealth Infusion Center to bring the healing power of mindful birding to patients undergoing various infusion treatments.

Flight and Feather Fridays: Held at the Fort Collins Senior Center, these programs include a bird hike and lesson on various bird subjects occurring every other week throughout the year. There is a small fee for this program and space is limited for the moment. Sign up through the Recreator (<https://www.fcgov.com/recreator>).

Stewardship behind the Scenery: This summer,

FCAS is partnering with Fort Collins Natural Areas to bring an educational/stewardship program focusing on birds and the Poudre River.



Bird Flight Patterns and Music Program: FCAS is excited to bring this program, produced by The New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, to our members. This is a virtual concert program that explores five bird flight patterns alongside performances of classical music that move in the same shape and motion of each flight pattern. There is an article in the spring edition of *Audubon* magazine featuring this program. If you are interested in viewing this unique and interesting program, please message us on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/fcaudubon>) or email Sheila Webber at <mailto:13sheilaw@gmail.com>.



From <https://nbsymphony.org/>

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



Great-horned Owls in Oro Valley, AZ.
Photo by Margie Caswell.



Fort Collins Audubon Society
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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 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.