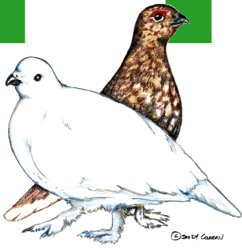


PTARMIGAN



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.

September 2019

Volume 50, Issue 6

**FCAS Presents Scott Rashid,
Director of Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute
"North America's Smallest Falcon:
Learning about the American Kestrel Nest Box Project"
Thursday, September 12
Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.
Social Time: 7 p.m.; Program 7:20 p.m.**

Colorado Avian Research and Rehabilitation Institute (CARRI) Director, Scott Rashid, will discuss the natural history of the American Kestrel, including their egg laying, incubation, nesting, and fledging activities. American Kestrel numbers have declined over the past several years due to loss of nesting sites, loss of habitat, predation, and disease. Therefore, members of CARRI have been constructing and placing especially designed nest boxes for these smallest of North

American falcons. They have placed over 70 kestrel nest boxes from Arvada to the Wyoming border. In 2018,



American Kestrel nestling by Scott Rashid.

kestrel pairs that used these nest boxes raised 80 young. This past year, American Kestrels in CARRI's boxes have raised over 100 young. The goal of the project is to have 200 nest boxes placed from Arvada to the Wyoming border within the next few years.

Scott Rashid founded CARRI in 1994. Each year CARRI monitors several Barn Owl, American Kestrel, Northern Pygmy-Owl, and Northern Saw-whet

Owl nests. Join us on September 12 at the Fort Collins

Senior Center for this program that is free and open to the public.

Welcome New National Members

FCAS welcomes new National Audubon Society members by sending one complimentary copy of our newsletter. We invite you to 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 the *Ptarmigan* after the complimentary issue, please support your local chapter and subscribe to the newsletter. See the details on the last page of the newsletter or on our website at www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.

President's Corner

by John Shenot

FCAS is looking for a volunteer to immediately fill the role of Recording Secretary on our Board of Directors. The secretary assembles the agenda and takes minutes at each monthly board meeting. Lori Pivonka, who had served as our secretary for the past year and a half, left that position over the summer in order to focus her energies on an exciting new career opportunity. We all wish Lori the best and thank her for her service to FCAS.



If you might be interested in filling the role of secretary for the remainder of 2019, please contact me as soon as possible (johnshenot@gmail.com). In addition, in January 2020 we will elect a new Board of Directors. We are currently looking for one volunteer to serve on the Nominating Committee that recruits board members. Even better, if you think you might want to serve on the board in 2020, please contact me or Bill Miller (bill5mcorp@gmail.com) right away. You do not need to be an expert on birds, wildlife, conservation, or running a non-profit to serve. Most board positions require about 10 hours per month of volunteer time; some a little more than that.

Finally, I want to send a long overdue "Thank You!" to our friends at the Collinwood Assisted Living and Memory Care facility in Fort Collins. Since 2016, Collinwood has offered up a free, private room for the monthly meetings of the FCAS Board of Directors. As I see it, that makes them one of our most valued private sector supporters and I should have thanked them—publicly—a long time ago.

FCAS CONTACTS

Audubon@fortnet.org

President

John Shenot

970-682-2551

johnshenot@gmail.com

Vice President

Liz Pruessner

970-484-4371

fortcollinsaudubonmembership@gmail.com

Program Chair

Jessie Meschievitz

jmesch@slbbi.com

970-686-1424

Field Trip Coordinator

Sirena Brownlee

sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com

970-669-8095

Newsletter Editor

Carol Jones

970-482-6295

cjones@cowisp.net

For other FCAS contacts visit

www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

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

Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free (unless otherwise noted) and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Changes to dates, meeting times or locations, and trip leaders are occasionally unavoidable (check the FCAS Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety> for cancellations due to inclement weather). Contact the listed trip leader prior to the day of the trip or visit fortcollinsaudubon.org for more information and updates. RSVP strongly encouraged.



Watching Burrowing Owls at
Coyote Ridge Natural Area.
Photo by Sirena Brownlee.

Sunday, Sept. 8, Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Bird Survey. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com, 970-669-1185 or 669-8095. FCAS performs a monthly bird census for the City of Fort Collins on the second Sunday of each month. All levels are welcome. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot.

Saturday, Sept. 14, Arapahoe Bend Natural Area–Rigden Reservoir. Leader: Robert Beauchamp, tyrannusb@gmail.com, 970-232-9296. This will be a leisurely 1.5–2-mile walk to explore Rigden Reservoir, the riparian habitat, and the ponds for migrating birds. All levels are welcome. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot.

Friday, Sept. 27, North Shields Pond Natural Area. Leader: John Shenot, johnshenot@gmail.com, 802-595-1669. This local hotspot almost always offers a good variety of bird species and a surprise or two. Last year it was teeming with sparrows and warblers throughout September. Let's hope this year is just as good. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot.



"The cornerstone of democracy rests on the foundation of an educated electorate."— *Thomas Jefferson*

The Importance of You

I recently overheard a conversation in which one speaker, commenting on the recent Democratic presidential candidates' debates, said: "I got bored with what the candidates were saying, so I changed the channel." Unfortunately this view that politics are boring is shared by too many voters.

Our nation is at a political crossroads—the future of our country will be determined by the outcome of the next presidential election. Voters must become informed about a multitude of issues as well as the candidates' positions on those issues, and then vote their conscience. It is not effective to support a candidate

just because his/her views on a single issue match yours.

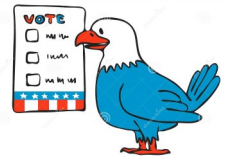
Things are more complicated than just a single issue. Under current and future consideration are issues of great importance, including, but not limited to: immigration, the environment, health care, public safety, crumbling infrastructure,

political disenfranchisement, poverty, fair taxation, energy, and perhaps the most important issue, global climate change, which is rapidly dictating the future of every living organism alive on earth today.

I believe most Audubon members are aware of the critical need to include science in our nation's decision-making processes. We can no longer tolerate politicians that choose to ignore facts because they either don't

understand the science or they perceive the scientific facts as getting in the way of the agenda they want to push. We should examine the motives underlying the decisions made by our elected officials, hold them accountable, and perhaps change their status.

On another note, citizens also should be willing to provide comments to federal agencies during public comment periods following notices of regulation changes. Gene Reetz, chair of the Audubon Colorado Council's (ACC) Water Task Force and retired federal employee, recently spoke to the importance of citizen comments. Noting that many have the opinion that "agencies don't really care or listen," Gene countered by saying, "That may be partially correct, especially federal agencies under the current Trump administration. Nevertheless, whether agencies listen or not, submitting comments has critical value." Important reasons to submit comments include: your comments become part of the official public record, which forms the basis for future decisions; agencies are required to respond to comments; and the information in the public record becomes the basis for any litigation. Gene concluded: "As a general rule, the more specific and personal you can make your comments, the better." I will add, become an informed voter, submit comments, and, most importantly, vote.



FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Glenn Blanchard

Angus Day

David & Elizabeth Dennis

Michele Hartman

Nancy Hitchins

Mary Humstone

Nick Komar

Janae Malpas

Lori Nixon

Kay O'Hara

David Otis

Rob Pickett

Terry Podmore

Joe Polazzi

Susan Quinlan

Kenneth Reek

Kathleen Salter

Barbara P. Tilmant

Barbara Turnbull

Lynette & Craig Seymour

Margaret Winkler

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.



Eastern Screech Owl
By Doug Swartz.



Mason Trail Kiosk Presents: Birding and Bike Trails

FCAS is always looking for innovative ways to provide outreach and environmental education in the community. We noticed a kiosk on the Mason Trail that had been empty for at least 10 years, so we asked for and received permission from city departments to upgrade it with bike trail and bird information. Home Depot donated \$80 toward the cost of a new UV-resistant Lexan sheet to protect the signs, and we generated bird lists from eBird specific to the trail. We were able to obtain grants to defer the cost of the designing, printing, and mounting of the metal posters.

A remarkably rich diversity of wildlife can be seen in Fort Collins along its 44 trails covering over 282 miles. These trails, used for walking, bicycling, and other forms of recreation, also increase connectivity between natural areas and protect species biodiversity. The Mason Trail is 3.5 miles, stretching from Prospect Road to south of Harmony Road with connections to Fossil Creek Trail and Spring Creek Trail, and serves as a convenient route in the central core of Fort Collins. The kiosk provides an opportunity to introduce readers to some of the common birds on the bike trails and teaches trail users about the benefits of birds to the ecosystem.

FCAS has identified 427 bird species in Larimer County and over 100 of these have been seen on the Mason Trail. Taking time to learn about the birds when hiking or biking with children is a wonderful pastime for families. It's fun and builds values of respect and compassion for nature. Bird-watching tourism has a

high potential to improve the financial wellbeing of local communities, educate locals about the value of biodiversity, and create local and national incentives on the preservation of natural areas. Urban development and land use changes affect the abundance and/or diversity of many wildlife species. Trails can connect fragmented spaces by adding privately stewarded land to the existing network of public natural areas, parks, and storm-water properties



Recently installed Mason Trail Kiosk.

across Fort Collins.

Bring your binoculars and come visit the new kiosk with us on September 18 at 10:30 a.m. Meet at the Spring Creek stop on MAX near Whole Foods for a short bird hike (about one-half mile). We'll return to Whole Foods for goodies and drinks. Please let us know if you will attend at argodwin63@gmail.com, so we can have enough bird lists. If you are late call 913-424-5345, so we can arrange meeting.

Upcoming Education Opportunities

FCAS and Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (BCR) are now offering classes and hikes through the City of Fort Collins Recreator. Register at fcgov.com/recreator, register in person, or call 970-221-6655.

Join us for Feather and Flight Friday walks at the Fort Collins Senior Center led by Sheila Weber. As part of our partnership with the Senior Center and the new habitat hero garden, we are offering bird hikes from the Senior Center to Rolland Moore Park. All are two hours hikes that start at the garden



Clark's Grebe by John Shenot.

on the patio at 9 a.m.; cost is \$6. Dates: Friday, Sept. 13; Friday, Sept. 27; and Friday, Oct. 11.

Front Range Bird ID class for beginners is offered by Erin Youngberg from BCR. Learn techniques to identify birds, and how to use a field guide and binoculars. All are two hour hikes that start at the garden on the patio at 3 p.m.; cost is \$15. Dates: Sunday, Sept. 8; Sunday, Oct. 20; and Sunday, Nov. 17.



2019 Birdathon: Highly Successful! ——— By Bill Miller

The 2019 FCAS Birdathon has been a wild ride, to say the least. To start, Mother Nature provided us with, not one, but two, “bomb cyclones” in the weeks prior to the 10-day Birdathon count period that ran from May 3–12. This extended count period provided greater flexibility for the eight teams, consisting of 29 team members, to pick a convenient 24-hour period.

The financial statistics of the Birdathon included 133 pledges received from 130 team members and donors. Total pledges were \$7,986; total net receipts to date are \$8,249.09. We incurred expenses of \$40, plus an unknown amount in printing and postage expenses for sending out donation acknowledgment letters.

Last spring the FCAS Board of Directors pledged three \$100 prizes to be awarded to the teams that had the highest species count, had the highest number of unique species, and raised the most money. Collectively, the eight teams counted 191 species with 40 of those species being unique or seen by just one team. The team of Irene Fortune, Laura Kleespies, Cheryl Ann

Orwig, Christine Sparks, and Bobbie Tilmant won the first two prizes with the highest species count of 141, which included 13 unique species. The third prize goes to the team composed of John Shenot and Doug Swartz who raised \$2,768 from 48 donors. Their two-man team raised one-third of the total raised by the Birdathon.

In addition to raising more contributions than all previous Birdathon efforts, this year also had three new firsts: (1) we had our first local business sponsor, Poudre Pet and Feed Supply, which pledged \$300

to the Birdathon; (2) the Poudre Pet and Feed monies were to be used to provide T-shirts to all of the team members; and (3) we received a corporate matching gift of \$40 from Pfizer, from which our treasurer, Joe Polazzi, retired.

The T-shirts and cash prizes will be presented to the Birdathon team members at the September 2019 program meeting. The members of the FCAS Board wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Birdathon team members and donors whose generosity helped to secure the financial health of our chapter.



Swallow Gallery by Doug Swartz.

June Field Trip to Rocky Mountain National Park

A beautiful, and cool enough to be comfortable, morning was enjoyed by FCAS members and their guests June 15. The significant breeding bird area visited provided a

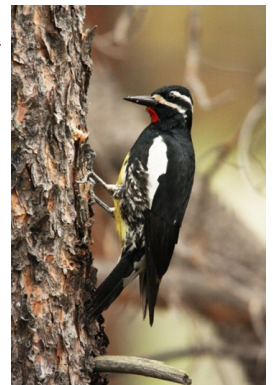


Field trip participants
by Ron Harden.

number of species, some not readily found unless it is known where to look. Species seen or heard included Violet-green

Swallow, Pygmy Nuthatch, Green-tailed Towhee, Black-headed Grosbeak, Wilson's Warbler, House Wren, Lincoln's Sparrow, Warbling Vireo, Mountain Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Black-billed Magpie, Western Wood-Pewee, Red-naped Sapsucker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Brown-headed Cowbird, Song Sparrow, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Tree Swallow, and Steller's Jay.

Participants included: Robin Welsh, Sarah Crosby, Greg and Danette Vassilopoulos, Melannie Hartman, Carol and Andrew Klingensmith, Georgene Inaka and Al Burkart, Diane Kristoff, Ann Colpitts, Anna and James Fuller, Larry Sherman, and Ron Harden.



Williamson's
Sapsucker
by Ron Harden.



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
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.