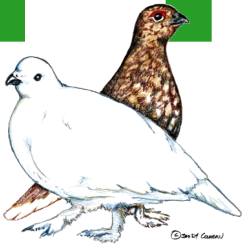


PTARMIGAN



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.

March 2021

Volume 52, Issue 3

FCAS Hosts

David Leatherman, Forest Entomologist and Avid Birder

Presenting:

"Grandview Cemetery, My Quality-Of-Life Saver During A Pandemic"

Thursday, March 11

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/89316524871>



**Cedar Waxwing masked by nature
by David Leatherman.**

cided it was essential to stay local, but go outside and continue monitoring the local life of Grandview Cemetery. Between mid-March and December 31, 2020, I visited this memorial sanctuary exactly 175 days. This presentation details how delving deeper into a place I already knew well kept me sane, and yielded significant

"COVID-19 changed all our lives in 2020 and continues to do so," said Dave. "All of us had personal decisions to make in light of the ever-changing public health guidelines and our own sense of what is right. Early on I de-

new information. Ironies abound when you consider the setting was a place associated with death—during a pandemic—amid 20,000 souls who without fail stayed compliant six feet under. Two mountain bird species were documented nesting in Fort Collins for the first time. A European insect import revealed itself as a life-saving staple following adverse weather that eliminated other wildlife foods. An elk showed up, as confused as the rest of us. Masks appeared on headstone portraits. And the question arose, 'Is it safe to pick up those sliced tee shots lying in Section 7?'"

Dave Leatherman is a trained forest entomology and lifelong birder. Join us for this sure-to-be educational and entertaining evening on March 11.



**Mask by Norma Verhoeff.
Selfie by David Leatherman.**



Apparently, Mahatma Gandhi never actually said a famous quote attributed to him: "Be the change you wish to see in the world." What he did say is perhaps even better: "If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. We need not wait to see what others do."

I've heard from a lot of people who believe that changes in the political composition of our local or national governments will lead to better environmental policies. I hope they are right, and I can assure you that FCAS will raise our voice on conservation issues of concern to our members. But I would also encourage each of us to heed

Gandhi's words.



It's easy for us to criticize and oppose new water supply projects, or the pollution and climate damage that come from fossil fuel power plants and gasoline-powered cars. But the truth is, we create the demand for these things—or for greener

alternatives. Our choices make a difference. Any of us fortunate enough to have large amounts of disposable income could make a big difference by adding solar power to our home or replacing that old gas guzzler with an electric car. Both of these big investments can actually save money over the long term. But even on a more modest budget, we have options to "change ourselves." We can save water and

money through behavior changes (<https://www.home-water-works.org/>) or by buying fixtures that bear the Water Sense label (<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-products>).

We can save gas and money by birding closer to home or biking to our destinations. And we can reduce the need for fossil fuel power plants and save money by conserving energy, again through behavior change (<https://www.energy.gov/articles/10-energy-saving-tips-spring>) or by buying ENERGY STAR-labeled products (<https://www.energystar.gov/products>).



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.

FCAS CONTACTS

President

John Shenot

802-595-1669

johnshenot@gmail.com

Vice President

Liz Pruessner

970-484-4371

Elizabeth.Pruessner@colostate.edu

Program Chair

Jessie Meschievitz

jlmesch852@gmail.com

970-324-1550

Membership Chair

Harry Rose

970-430-6731

hrose@toadaway.net

Newsletter Editor

Carol Jones

970-481-5213

cjones@cowisp.net

For other FCAS contacts visit

www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

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

Canada Geese
by Ann Kramer



FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

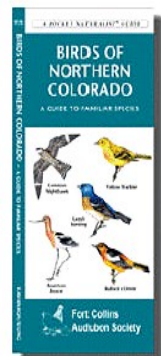
Is available at the following retailers who support our organization with the sales:

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



New Habitat Gardening Webinar Series

Many of us have spent much of the past 12 months inside our own homes. With the cold of winter and the need to socially distance from anyone outside of our households, it would be no surprise if cabin fever was also spreading throughout our communities. Despite these challenges, there is a COVID-safe way that you can bring more of the outside world to your home: gardening.

Gardening can benefit your life in a variety of ways. Unsurprisingly, it improves both the aesthetic and ecological value of your property. Studies also show that gardening can have a myriad of health benefits, including reductions in depression and anxiety, increases in life satisfaction, quality of life, and sense of community. What better remedy could there be for the stay-at-home blues?

In addition, gardening in an ecologically-minded way has significant conservation value. Many people view wildlife conservation as broad policies, long-term programs, and protection of large swaths of public lands. Although these initiatives are

important, there is also work that each of us can do in our everyday lives and at our own homes to make a difference. Creating and maintaining habitat in your backyard is one of the most impactful ways you can help to protect our locally native birds, insects, and plants. Because many species need connected habitat and migratory pathways, your individual impact is amplified when your neighbors partici-

pate, too.

Fortunately, we have a way to help you get started with your own habitat garden. Beginning at the end of this month, FCAS is partnering with Audubon Rockies to promote the Habitat Hero Garden program, a six-part Zoom webinar series so that we can learn about the design, installation, and maintenance of habitat gardens. Each week, we will have both a professional

horticulturist and a homeowner with their own garden share their expertise. Our pros include Deryn Davidson, CSU Horticulture Extension Agent; Amy Scanes-Wolfe, Harlequin's Gardens Sustainable Nursery landscaper; and Catherine Wissner, University of Wyoming Laramie County Extension Horticulturist.

The programs and dates are as follows:

Design: March 30, 12—1 p.m., Deryn Davidson, "Landscape Design Made Easy." **April 1, 12—1 p.m.** Homeowner, TBD.

Installation: April 6, 12—1 p.m., Amy Scanes-Wolfe, "Prepping for Success." **April 8, 12—1 p.m.** Homeowner, TBD.

Maintenance: April 13, 12—1 p.m., Catherine Wissner, "More Fun—Less Work in the Garden." **April 15, 12—1 p.m.**,

Homeowner, TBD.

Once the bird-friendly yard is in place, the Habitat Hero designation can be applied for through Audubon Rockies (<https://rockies.audubon.org/habitat-hero/apply>). Successful landscapes will receive a plaque to display in the yard to promote the concept and encourage others to garden with wildlife in mind.

Mark your calendars, invite your friends, grab your shovels,

and join us for this series. Check our website for updates on the schedule and speakers: www.fortcollinsaudubon.org.



Bill and Sue Miller's Habitat Hero Garden.
Photo by Bill Miller.



The Miller's Habitat Hero pond.
Photo by Bill Miller.



Northern Harrier by Any Other Name

It is known as Blue Hawk, Mouse Hawk, Frog Hawk, Bogtrotter, and White-rumped Hawk, but is officially known as the Northern Harrier (NH). It is called harrier from its habit of raiding or harrying its prey. Its Latin name is *Circus cyaneus*, meaning "circles in air, dark blue." The NH is my favorite bird due to its owl-like facial disc and its flight habit of methodically flying low to the ground with eyes and ears fixed on finding, either by sight or hearing, small prey such as mice, or large insects in the grasses below. I was thrilled at Barr Lake State Park when a flying female NH turned her head to look at me for a moment and then went calmly back to her hunting. The following video shows both male and female NHs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5X6pl1JM-Jc>

It is easy to distinguish mature adults because male NHs have blue-gray coloring on their backs and top surface of wings, while female NHs have brown coloring on their backs and tops of wings. Both sexes have a white rump patch and both sexes of immature NHs are brown. The male NH performs a spectacular aerial courtship display to impress his potential mate. Some pairs are monogamous, while some males have up to three mates. After mating, a nest is built on the ground by the female and three to nine bluish white colored eggs are laid. Often the nest is exposed to

the sun and the female NH will straddle the nest and cover it with her wings to protect the nestlings from overheating. She will also decoy enemies away from the nest by beating her wings and making piteous cries to draw them away. Northern Harriers feed on small mammals, frogs, snakes, carrion, large insects, and small birds. They sometimes hunt at the edges of grass fires to capture prey driven out by the flames.

Local avian photographer Richard Herrington says, "During breeding season, Northern Harriers become very territorial and will attack hawks, animals,

and individuals that approach their nesting area. They will not approach a cluster of birders, which they see as a 'pack of animals.' However, the stress may cause them to abandon their nest temporarily. They will circle in the distance crying, but remain in the nest area.

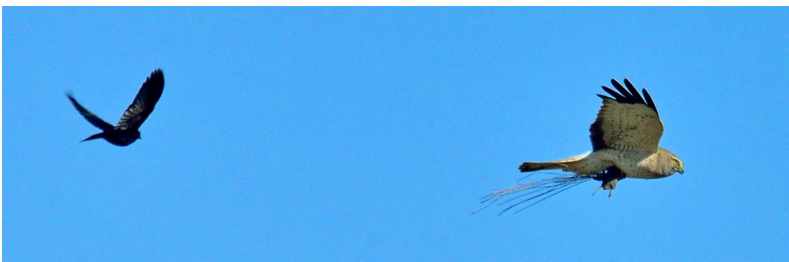
If you see a NH (or any hawk) constantly screaming or crying, you are possibly too close to their nest. Please immediately move back 100 feet or more. If you are on a trail, move on. Four people paused 200 feet from a NH nest is much more stressful than one or two people walking by at the same distance. When I see a bird that is stressed, I do not return to the area for a few days—even then carefully."



Northern Harrier harassed by Red-winged Blackbird by Richard Herrington.

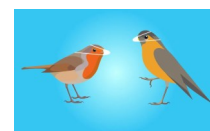


Northern Harrier by Richard Herrington.



Northern Harrier bringing home dinner by Richard Herrington.

Due to COVID-19, FCAS field trips are suspended until further notice.



FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members



Denise A. Bretting
Kate Burgess
Agnus Day
Susan Degutz
James & Ruth DeMartini
Beth Dillon
Ann Donoghue
Georgia Doyle
King H. Ebay
Willard Flowers
Alan Godwin
James R. Hayes

Pamela Herrlein
Janet Holley
Sandra Hunter
Joyce Jones
Sue Kenney
Kristin Long
Robin Long
Marcia Maeda
Ted Manahan
John & Sydney Oberle
Daniel J. Odonnell
Paul Opler

Phil Phelan
Ann Reichardt
John Reichardt
Kathleen Salter
Anne Saunders
Carol Seemueller
Daniel Teska
Hank Thode
Al Trask
Mark Wagner
Sheila & Dan Webber
Sandra 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.



All photos taken in Bill and Sue Miller's Habitat Hero garden. All photos by Bill Miller. From top left clockwise: Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Two-tailed Swallowtail, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and butterfly on Plains Coreopsis.



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.