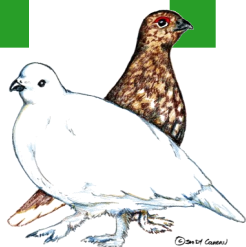


# PTARMIGAN



## FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 271968 • Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968 • [www.fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org)

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

May 2022

Volume 54, Issue 5

**FCAS Hosts Dr. Sheela Turbek, Colorado State University**

**Presenting The Bird Genoscape Project:**

**Harnessing the power of genomics to advance migratory bird conservation**

**Thursday, May 12**

**7 p.m., Announcements; 7:20, Program**

**Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr**

**\*\*\*This program will also be accessible online using Zoom\*\*\***

**Enter the following link on your web browser and follow the instructions to join the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86537729303>**

According to recent research, North American birds have plummeted by nearly 30 percent since 1970, a staggering population decline that corresponds to almost three billion birds. The Bird Genoscape Project is a multi-university initiative to map the population-specific routes of migratory birds using genomic tools. This talk will highlight some of the ways in which the project applies genomic tools to connect migratory bird populations across time and space, and understand how populations may respond to future environmental stressors.

Dr. Sheela Turbek is a postdoctoral researcher in Dr. Kristen Ruegg's lab at CSU. Her doctoral research at



**Willow Flycatcher by Neil Losin.**

the University of Colorado Boulder focused on the role of mate choice and migratory behavior in generating and maintaining avian diversity. Lately, she is interested in using genomic tools to advance the conservation of threatened avian species.

The Audubon Spring 2022 Special Issue magazine features, "The Wonder of Migration," including an article, "Birds of a Feather,"

about Kristen Ruegg's lab work at CSU (<https://www.audubon.org/audubonmagazine>).

Join us on May 12 for this information program meeting. The public is welcomed to this free meeting.

**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](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org).

## President's Corner

by John Shenot

I usually dedicate my column toward sharing news about important business for our chapter, but this month I'm going to deviate from that and promote some other organizations that are allies and friends of FCAS.

Most of you know that FCAS is a local chapter of National Audubon Society. Some of you also know that NAS has a regional office in Fort Collins, called Audubon Rockies. Audubon Rockies provides terrific professional support for all the Audubon chapters in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. We sometimes partner with them on conservation projects and special events.

Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO) is a statewide organization devoted to the study, conservation, and enjoyment of Colorado's birds. They maintain the official records of rare bird sightings in Colorado, maintain the



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Visit us on Facebook:

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

COBIRDS google group where people can post or read rare bird alerts, and publish a quarterly journal called *Colorado Birds*.

Colorado State University Field Ornithologists (CSUFO) is a student club on the CSU campus that fosters a passion for birds and birding among young adults. The club members I've met over the years make me optimistic about the future for birds and other wildlife.

All three of these organizations are hosting "Birdathon" fundraisers in May 2022, and we encourage you to consider making donations. A

# Birdathon!

Birdathon is a fun, competitive event in which teams of people compete to see the greatest number of bird species on a single day. Supporters can donate a fixed amount (e.g., \$25) or pledge a small donation for each species seen by the team they support (e.g., \$0.25 per species). To learn more, sign up to participate, or pledge a donation: 1) CSUFO (May 7), email [csuornithology@gmail.com](mailto:csuornithology@gmail.com); 2) CFO (May 7), details at <https://cobirds.org/cobc-details/>; and 3) Audubon Rockies (May 15-21), details at <https://p2p.onecause.com/audubonbirdathon/event/audubon-rockies>.

## Species Highlight

This month's highlight is the Northern Flicker, a common woodpecker, family Picidae, seen here in Northern Colorado. It comes in two subspecies: the Red-Shafted and Yellow-Shafted Northern Flicker, both found in Colorado. These can breed together and form an intergrade individual, a hybrid of two subspecies. A fun fact about this species is that despite being a woodpecker it mostly feeds on the ground looking for ants and burrowing beetles.



Northern Flicker by Mat Davis, Macaulay Library.



## The Fight for Wild Birds

If you ever find yourself in Brownsville, Texas in Olivera Park, you will be greeted by the sight of hundreds of parrots. The sound is thunderous, and more impressive, are the colors present. Watching these amazing birds it's hard to believe that they were descendants of illegal activities, poached birds caught in Mexico and brought to the United States as pets.

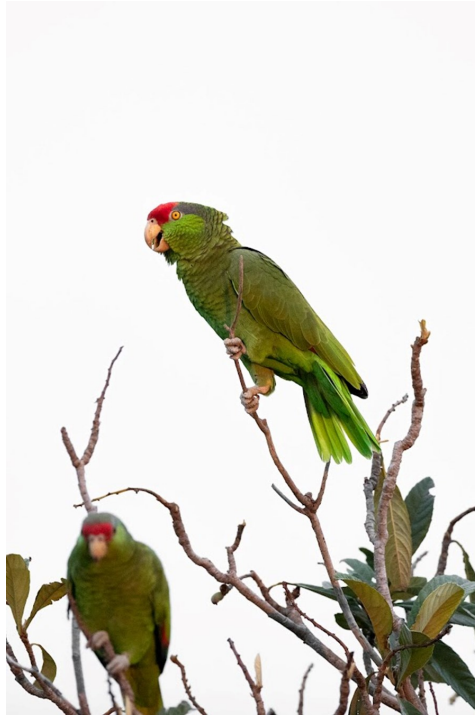
Birds around the world face many dangers, from feral cats to habitat loss, but none so complex as wildlife trafficking. Worldwide wildlife trafficking is the third most valuable illegal commerce, worth nearly \$10 billion. With the high value, it is not surprising that nearly five million birds are trafficked every year around the world. These include rare raptors, such as Harpy Eagles that are killed for their talons, hummingbirds for their feathers and taxidermy, and parrots as exotic pets. This industry is a complex and challenging to stop. Like the drug cartels of Mexico, the cartels of wildlife trafficking are well funded, expansive, and always adapting to the techniques used by law enforcement.

In addition to direct effects, wildlife trafficking has negative consequences for birds in the surrounding environment through secondary damages. The poaching of rhino, for example, has led to the deaths of many vultures in South and East Africa. This sadly is not because of ecological reasons, but due to aldicarb, a car-

bamate insecticide that is the main ingredient in Temik, a poison that is used to kill animals and in Africa, is sprinkled on poached carcasses to kill vultures. The vultures are targeted by poachers because vultures that feed on carcasses are followed by wildlife officials to lead them to poached rhinos. Poachers soon figured out what was happening and started poisoning vultures in an effort to keep officials away from their illegal kills. In South Africa, five hundred dead vultures were found around one elephant carcass.

In 2016, the United States passed the bipartisan End Wildlife Trafficking Act. This act pushes the U.S. government to invest in programs working to end wildlife trafficking around the world. Because of this act, criminologists, journalists, conservationists, and politicians are working to combat wildlife trafficking. Techniques include geospatial analysis to identify poaching hotspots and trafficking pathways, educational programs

focused on buyer demographics and poaching communities, deep cover investigations uncovering cartels, and increased action in other countries to promote laws and regulations that stop trafficking. These increased actions have helped many species around the world and brought attention to the issue. And you can help by spreading the word about wildlife trafficking.

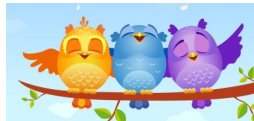


Red-crowned Parrots of Olivera Park  
by Sam Woodward.

### Thank You New and Renewing Members

Diane Barrett  
Rick Barry  
Anne Butler  
Tom Butler  
Patricia J. Cohn  
Barbara Denny  
Danny Feig-Sandoval  
Jane Fine

Mary Harris  
Diane McCrann  
Kelli McKay  
Jane Michalski  
Pauline Nol  
Patricia Pettine  
Andrea Scott



Your support makes our efforts possible and helps us achieve our mission of connecting people to the natural world.

### 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





## World Migratory Bird Day 2022

Migration has begun and it's not too early to think about what we can do to help. Every year billions of birds migrate across North America and 80 percent primarily migrate at night using the night sky to navigate. World Migratory Bird Day raises global awareness of the threats faced by migratory birds, their ecological importance, and the need for international cooperation to conserve them.

In 1993, The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center created the International Migratory Bird Day coordinated by the Environment for the Americas (EFTA), a nonprofit organization that strives to connect people to bird conservation. In 2018, EFTA joined the Convention on Migratory Species and the agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds to create a single, global bird conservation education campaign: World Migratory Bird Day. This new alliance furthers migratory bird conservation around the globe by creating a world-wide campaign with a focus on the need to conserve migratory birds and protect their habitats.

Birds fly hundreds of thousands of miles each year to find the best ecological conditions and habitats for feeding, breeding, and raising their young. It is a dangerous journey that involves a wide range of threats often caused by human activities. Flying long distances involves crossing many borders between countries with differing environmental politics, legislation, and conservation measures. Billions of birds fly at night, navigating the night sky. As they pass over big cities, they become disoriented by bright artificial lights and sky glow, which often causes them to collide with buildings or windows. Stressed birds become disoriented, waste valuable energy and, in urban areas, are more susceptible to starvation and predation.

The theme for 2022 is "Lights Out," a campaign providing safe passage for nocturnal migrants. The

strategy is to convince building owners and managers to turn off excess lighting during certain months to help provide safe passage between nesting and wintering grounds.

What can we do? Turn off unnecessary lights, keep indoor lights indoors, install motion sensors and timers to control light so it's turned off when not needed and down shield exterior lights, so they don't spill beyond where they are needed. If you are interested in tracking bird migrations, check out BirdCast, by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Colorado State University, and Lights Out Alerts operated by CSU's AeroEco Lab to minimize outdoor lighting on the nights with the highest migration activity. More information is available on FCAS's website, Facebook, and Instagram accounts.

Fort Collins Audubon will partner with Fort Collins Natural Areas May 14 for a program at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area from 7

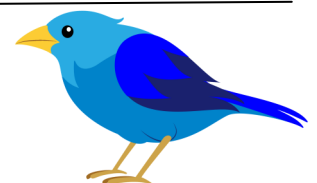
to about 9:30 p.m. The program will feature a migration game highlighting the physical preparation birds undergo, as well as obstacles they encounter, especially focusing on the light pollution issue. AJ Chlebnik, Fort Collins Natural Areas public engagement specialist, and FCAS's education coordinator Sheila Webber will speak on night-sky friendly lighting and lights out during migration. This will be followed by a night walk to look and listen for nocturnal species.

For more information and resources, see Audubon Lights Out (<https://www.audubon.org/lights-out-program>), Lights Out Colorado (<https://rockies.audubon.org/naturalist/lights-out>), and Lights Out Denver (<https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directories/Parks-Recreation/Trees-Natural-Resources/Wildlife/Lights-Out-Denver>).



Have a good Summer!

Just a reminder that the *Ptarmigan* is not published June through August. Check the FCAS website for events throughout the summer.



## Upcoming Field Trips through August

Register at [www.facebook.com/groups/123106328705](http://www.facebook.com/groups/123106328705), <https://www.instagram.com/fcaudubon/>, or [fortcollinsaudubon.org](http://fortcollinsaudubon.org). Registrants will be posted one week before the scheduled trip. Attendance is limited to a maximum of 14 individuals. Bobcat Ridge surveys will not require registration.

**Sundays May 8, June 12, July 10, and Aug. 14, Bobcat Ridge Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com) or 970-402-1292. The 2-hour hike is a little more than four miles. No registration required and there is no participation limit, but please email or text Denise that you plan to attend. Meet at 7 a.m. on May 8 and 6:30 a.m. on June 12, July 10, and Aug. 14 in the Bobcat Ridge parking lot.

**Sunday, May 15, Dixon Reservoir/Pineridge Natural Area.** Leader: Sirena Brownlee, [sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com](mailto:sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com), 970-980-6184. Pineridge is a gem for resident and migratory foothills species. This trip will focus on bird songs. Meet at 7 a.m. at the Maxwell Natural Area parking lot.

**Saturday, May 28, Arapahoe Bend Natural Area.** Leader: Josh Bruening, [mailto:87211jib@gmail.com](mailto:mailto:87211jib@gmail.com). Explore the forest during the latter part of migration season. This trip involves some minor hiking and will look primarily at nesting birds that are settling down in Fort Collins for the summer. Meet at 8 a.m.

**Thursday, June 2, CSU Environmental Learning Center.** Leader: Sirena Brownlee, [sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com](mailto:sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com), 970-980-6184. The ELC offers a variety of habitats along the Poudre River. Most mi-



American Dipper by Doug Swartz.

grants will have arrived by early June and the evening is a great time to bird this time of year. Plan for 1.5–2-mile walk. Meet at 6 p.m. in the parking lot.

**Saturday, June 4, Running Deer Natural Area.** Leader Robert Beauchamp, [torobbeau@gmail.com](mailto:torobbeau@gmail.com). A fun trip looking for birds in the reeds and small ponds. We expect to see Red-winged Blackbirds, nesting Great Blue Herons, and potentially Virginia Rail. Start time is 8 a.m. at the trailhead parking lot on Prospect Road.

**Saturday, June 11, field trip to Rocky Mountain National Park sites.** Meet at 8 a.m. at the Lily Lake parking lot on the east border of RMNP, about 8 miles south on Highway 7 from the intersection of Highways 34 and 36 at the east end of Estes Park. Possible species include waterfowl on the lake, such as Common Goldeneye; shorebirds, such as Spotted Sandpiper; forest birds, such as Williamson's Sapsucker; and American Dippers. After Lily Lake, we'll travel north to the Lumpy Ridge

trailhead where we will watch for raptors, including Peregrine Falcon, as well as passerine species. Registration is not required for these field trips. Those wishing to enter the park must have a timed entry registration available in advance. A park pass or entrance fee also is required. Carpooling from Fort Collins is encouraged. Questions can be emailed to Ron Harden at [hardenrr48@outlook.com](mailto:hardenrr48@outlook.com).

**Saturday, June 18, Well Gulch Nature Trail Lory State Park.** Leader: Sirena Brownlee, [sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com](mailto:sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com), 970-980-6184. A hidden gem for birding in Lory State Park. The abundant wild plum thickets and other native shrubs provide habitat for a variety of migrant and resident foothills birds. This walk will focus on nesting birds along the trail. In previous years we have seen nesting Cedar Waxwings, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Blue Grosbeak, and many more. Meet at the Eltuck Group Picnic Area at 9 a.m. for a one mile moderate hike up the Well Gulch trail. Day passes are available if you don't have a state park pass.



Blue Grosbeak by Ron Harden.

**Tuesday, July 5, Reservoir Ridge Natural Area.** Leader: John Shenot, [johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com), 802-595-1669. In recent years, this Fort Collins natural area has been the most reliable location in Larimer County to find Bobolink. Reservoir Ridge also offers good habitat for grassland species such as Dickcissel, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak. Meet at the parking lot on N. Overland Trail at 6:30 p.m. for an early evening bird walk. Important note: Reservoir Ridge is a large natural area with three parking lots. Be sure to meet at the lot on N. Overland Trail, not the lot on Michaud Lane or N. CR 23.

**Saturday, July 30, Gateway Natural Area.** Leader: Nolan Bunting, [nbunting@rams.colostate.edu](mailto:nbunting@rams.colostate.edu), 907-299-4625. Gateway is home to a large population of nesting birds and roosting bats. We will look for American Dippers and some of the resident mountain birds. The trip involves a steep hike up to Seaman Reservoir and potentially some muddy trails. Entrance fees must be paid by individuals entering the park.



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