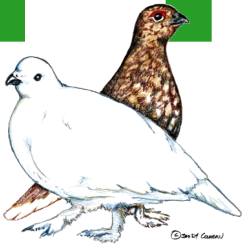


PTARMIGAN



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 2022

Volume 54, Issue 6

FCAS Hosts David Leatherman, Forest Entomologist and Avid Birder

Presenting: "The Natural Highs of Lower Rist Canyon"

Thursday, September 8

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

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

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

Please use the following link at or before 7 p.m. to join the meeting virtually:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/83108184042>

The fancy word for the zone where two different habitat types meet is "ecotone." Rist Canyon is one such place, a melding of prairie with mountains. The wondrous math of it is $1 + 1 = 3$: prairie and mountain species plus those of the foothills not typical of the other two. This presentation celebrates the rich diversity of one small piece of lower Rist Canyon with emphasis on taxa characteristic of wild-fire and bark beetle — after-maths.

David Leatherman is a retired forest entomologist, avid birder, and photographer. Join us on Sept. 8 for this meet-



Green-tailed Towhee by David Leatherman.

ing that is free and open to the public.

Note: Due to the unpredictable nature of COVID, it may become necessary to cancel the in-person portion of our meeting and conduct the meeting entirely via Zoom. Please check our website, Instagram, or Facebook page the day of the meeting to see if the in-person gathering has been canceled.

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.

President's Corner

by John Shenot

Every January, FCAS members elect new officers and directors to serve on our Board of Directors. The process begins, however, well before January — it begins now, in fact. Our bylaws require us to appoint at least three members to an ad hoc nominations committee *before* our October meeting. The job of the nominations committee is to recruit 11 candidates who are willing to serve on the Board in 2023. Ideally, the people who serve on this committee would not want to be candidates to serve on the Board in 2023. (It's always awkward when a person recommends themselves for a job, right?)

Experience has taught me that if we wait until October to ask, we'll never find three volunteers for the nominations committee. So, I'm asking you to please let me know as soon as possible if you would be willing to serve in this way. Many of our currently serving board members are willing to continue in 2023, and we also may have contact information and suggestions for additional people we think would be a good fit. This should make the task of finding 11 volunteers very manageable.

While I have your attention, you can also let me know if you'd like to serve on the Board of Directors in 2023. I'll share any statements of interest with the nominations committee.

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Visit us on Facebook or Instagram:

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

<https://www.instagram.com/fcaudubon/>



Gray Catbird with Bull Snake
by John Shenot.

Wings and Wheels

The Wings and Wheels event is returning this fall for its second year. This brilliant partnership with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Fort Collins Natural Areas, and the FCAS is Saturday, October 15 from 9 a.m. to noon. Educational tables and displays will be placed at eight different locations along the Poudre River Trail from Taft Avenue to Lee Martinez Park where volunteers will be teaching about a wide range of topics from migration to waterfowl to beaks and bills. Hikers and bikers can go by, pick up a stamp at each location and learn about the exciting wildlife of the Poudre River, recently designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA).

Please email Barbara.patterson@frontrange.edu to volunteer for this event, meet new people, and have tons of fun! We need a lot of volunteers for this event.



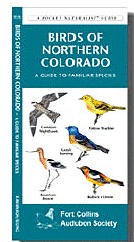
FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

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 Outdoor Gear
1200 N. College
(970) 221-0544

Jax Loveland West
Outdoor Gear
2665W. Eisenhower
(970) 667-7375



Environmental Learning Center Joins the Poudre River Urban Corridor Important Bird Area

Fort Collins Audubon Society has facilitated the expansion of the Poudre River Urban Corridor Important Bird Area (IBA) to include Colorado State University's Environmental Learning Center (ELC).

An IBA is a designation given by the National Audubon Society indicating that it is a site that provides important habitat for one or more bird species during some portion of the year.

For a site to receive IBA designation, it must meet a set of scientific criteria created by Audubon experts.

These criteria include supporting species of concern, species of conservation priority, rare or unique habitat, significant concentrations of birds, and research value.

The IBA designation grants no legal authority over land ownership or use. It does not require landowners to change any management practices, nor would they be restricted in future decision-making regarding the land.

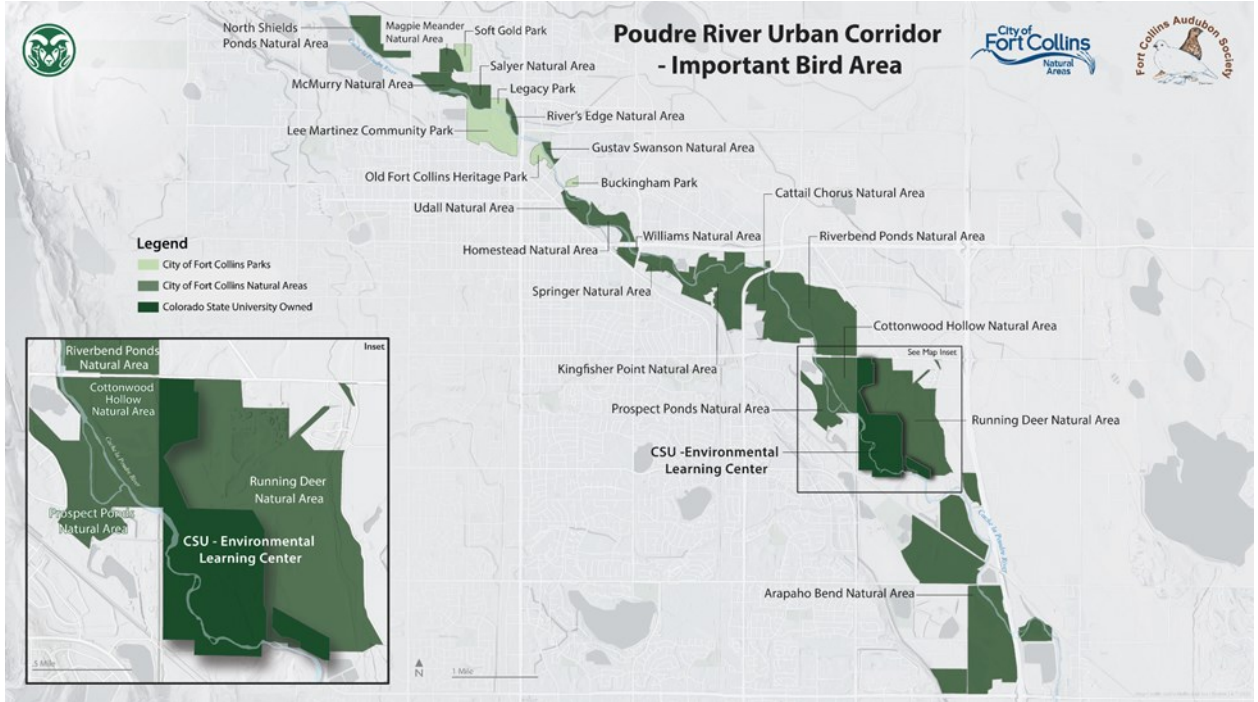
However, the designation is a powerful symbol that brings public awareness of conservation value. It emphasizes the significance of the habitat to policy-makers and adds weight to environmental advocacy.

For years, FCAS worked to have the Cache la Poudre River in Fort Collins designated as an IBA, as more than 300 species of birds have been seen in the area. In 2018, the City of Fort Collins agreed to designate the city-owned properties along the river corridor as an IBA. As a result, 22 parks and natural areas spanning from North Shields downriver to I-25 were included in the IBA.

Although FCAS was very pleased with the successful establishment of this IBA with the City, we have always hoped for the ELC to be included in the designation as well. The ELC is wonderfully managed, frequented by nature-lovers, and serves as a critical habi-

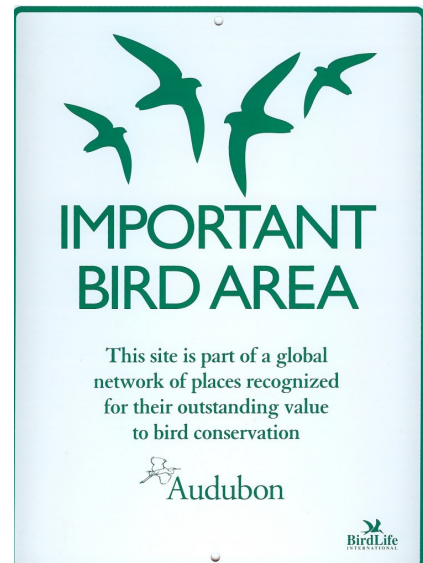
tat for many species. The site perfectly fits the criteria of an IBA and the designation aligns well with the ELC's mission of inspiring stewardship.

After working with the ELC leadership, the City of Fort Collins, and Audubon Rockies, FCAS has successfully expanded the Poudre River Urban Corridor IBA.



This expansion is not only a win for bird conservation, but for these organizations with a newfound partnership. Effective conservation requires strong relationships and collaboration between groups that can share resources and ideas. Fort Collins Audubon Society looks forward to this newfound opportunity to serve the wildlife and the people of our communities.

Keep an eye out for new IBA signs that will be erected in the ELC in the coming months. We will also be inviting everyone to celebrate with us.



Confession time. I used to kind of hate shorebirds. I know, I know — you are probably gasping in horror and clutching your pearls at this statement. But in my defense, most of my early shorebird experiences were brown specks through a hazy spotting scope that my husband swore were different species. Oh, that brown speck has a slightly pointier bill than the other 50 brown specks? Sure honey.

Over time and with the aid of my husband's relentless enthusiasm for the family, my opinion of shorebirds began to soften a little. After all, who can deny the weird majesty of the American Avocet? Or the mind-melting cuteness of a baby Killdeer? Even the Spotted Sandpiper won me over with its funny little tail bob. However, I still just couldn't bring myself to like the really little peeps. They continued to be nothing but brown specks and scope-induced headaches to me.

you can actually practice identifying them and really learn their defining characteristics.

If you're extra adventurous and don't mind getting completely covered in mud, you can lie down in the path of the incoming tide and be surrounded by birds as they're pushed up the beach. Aside from the mud invading every zipper and seam (RIP cell phone) it's absolutely magical. I was struck by how incredibly small most of the shorebirds are up close — no bigger than a Savannah Sparrow. It was also neat to see how each species uses its slightly

different bill for different foraging strategies. They may all look the same at first glance, but once you get to know them peeps are actually pretty neat.

So there you have it — my transformation from someone who didn't like shorebirds into someone who kind of does now. For those of you with similar feelings of animosity, know that there's hope for you too. When it all comes down to it the things that helped me the most were having a good teacher and lots and lots of practice. Next time someone offers you a peek through their scope at some brown specks, don't decline — say shore, why knot?



Western Sandpiper flock by Carrie Olson.



Black-bellied Plovers by Carrie Olson.

The thing that finally brought me over to the dark side was some good old fashioned exposure therapy — more specifically, the shorebird migration passing through Homer, Alaska. Each spring the shoreline becomes a moving carpet of several thousand birds darting to and fro as they fuel up on the way to the breeding grounds. And get this — they aren't just brown! The breeding plumage of many shorebird species is quite lovely, featuring every shade of red, grey, brown, and black. There's also a good variety of species present, so



Least Sandpiper by Carrie Olson.



Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free (unless otherwise noted) and currently open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Please understand that changes to dates, meeting times, locations, and trip leaders occasionally are unavoidable. One week before a scheduled trip, please visit the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/123106328705>), Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/fcaudubon/>), or fortcollinsaudubon.org for a link to register. Due to Covid, attendance is limited to a maximum of 12 individuals. Waitlisted individuals for a trip will be sent a link for the next available trip before registration is open to the public. Bobcat Ridge surveys do not require registration.

Sept. 11, 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 4



Eastern Kingbird
by Doug Swartz.

-hour survey hike is a little more than four miles covering moderate to flat terrain. No registration is required and there is no participation limit, but please email or text Denise if you plan to attend. Meet at 7 a.m. in the Bobcat Ridge Parking lot.

Sept. 17, Saturday, CSU Environmental Learning Center. Leader: Nolan Bunting, nbunting@rams.colostate.edu, 907-299-4625. Come and cele-

brate the creation of the Poudre River IBA by discovering some of the amazing species the area protects. This is an easy hike through a cottonwood grove and allows sights of the river. Meet at 8 a.m. in the ELC parking lot.

Interested in leading a Birding Trip? Have an idea for a trip? Email nbunting@rams.colostate.edu if you would like to volunteer or suggest a trip.



Great Blue Herons by Robin Allison.

Species Highlight

To celebrate the 25th Great Backyard Bird Count, we are highlighting a bird species in every newsletter this year, as well as on Facebook and Instagram. Want to submit a suggestion or photo? Email nbunting@rams.colostate.edu.

This month's highlight is the Common Nighthawk, a member of the order Caprimulgiformes, despite looking like it they are related to hummingbirds and swifts. During August, we begin to see larger numbers of them in the evening as they migrate south. They are a true crepuscular species



being only active at dawn and dusk. Another colloquial name for this species is the bullbat.

Common Nighthawk
by Jane Mann.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Melanie Barnett
Nikki Berlin
Jill Bland
Morris Clark
Jai Cockran
Joy Davis
Odell Dehart
Kathleen M. Dowd
Ernest Frank
Janice Freeman
Jennifer Gooden
Craig Harrison
Kate Holstein
Carol Jessop

Jon Johnson
Josie Kerrigan
Nancy Metzler
Christina Mild
Christina Nelson
Deborah Price
Jodie Rankin
Daniel Snyder
Jeffrey R. Stewart
Austin Stone
Jen Strating
Amy Tamlin
Elise Tobler

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.



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.