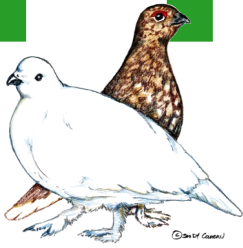


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FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY

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 2023

Volume 55, Issue 5

FCAS Hosts Rachel Belouin

Program Manager, Southern Plains, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

“Grasslands, Birds, and Grazing”

Thursday, May 11

Social time with Refreshments 7 p.m.; Announcements 7:20; Presentation, 7:30

Door Prize Drawing (must be present to win)

Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

This program will also be accessible online using Zoom

Enter the following link at 7 p.m.: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87830508988>

Rachel Belouin, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, will explore how compatible uses create habitat and resilience on our Great Plains. Rachel works with private landowners (farmers and ranchers) and other partners to help engage best practices for working lands to ensure grasslands stay in grass and to enhance wildlife habitat, especially for avian species. She also will share how Bird Conservancy of the Rockies approaches this unique partnership between beef and birds.

Rachel has a master's degree in Natural Resource



Cattle grazing on Pawnee Grasslands
photo by David Leatherman.

Stewardship with a concentration in grasslands and ecological restoration from Colorado State University. She is the Stewardship Program Manager, Southern Plains, with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. Rachel has experience working and living on a third-generation cattle ranch and enjoys riding her horse, trail running with her son, and a great book.

Join us for this informative program on May 11. It is free and the public is welcomed!

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 if you'd like 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.



Western
Kingbird
by Doug
Swartz.

President's Corner

This April, the FCAS Board of Directors began to consider whether it is time to change the name of our organization. There are two major reasons why we are exploring this possibility. First, as reported in this newsletter, we significantly expanded our chapter boundaries in 2021. Since that expansion happened, I've frequently found it necessary to explain to local government officials and others that "Fort Collins Audubon" is headquartered in Fort Collins, but represents and serves Audubon members across nearly all of Larimer County and portions of Weld County. The organization's name doesn't accurately describe who we are or where we work. When I invited members to fill out a survey in September 2021, more than a third of those who responded thought we should change the chapter name for that reason alone.

The second reason to consider a name change is the growing controversy over whether bird conservation organizations should tie their identities so closely to John James Audubon. It is an undisputed fact that Audubon, the man, was a slave owner — in accordance with the laws of his time, but long after many countries in the world had abolished that barbaric practice and abolitionists here in the United States were calling for its end. Does this fact diminish Audubon's artistic talent or his immense contributions to fostering appreciation for the birds of North America, which eventually led to conservation efforts and the creation of the National Audubon

by John Shenot

Society? I don't believe it does, but I also believe the mission of FCAS is more important than our "brand" (i.e., our name). And it may be that honoring a slaveholder in our organization's name hampers or will someday hamper the achievement of our mission because it offends and repels potential allies in the communities we serve.

To be clear, the Board of Directors has not committed to a name change. In fact, we cannot do so without a change in our bylaws that would have to be approved by our members. But long before any name change is proposed, we will be launching a process to solicit input and reactions from our members and other local stakeholders. Stay tuned for more details in the months to come.

Reminder

After this month's program on May 11, FCAS will start its traditional summer break. We do not publish the newsletter or host

chapter meetings in June, July, and August, but will host field trips and participate in community events. To keep informed throughout the summer, follow us on Instagram or Facebook.



*FCAS Wishes You a
Wonderful Summer!*

FCAS CONTACTS

President

John Shenot

802-595-1669

johnshenot@gmail.com

Vice President

Liz Pruessner

970-484-4371

lizpru@colostate.edu

Program Chair

Jessie Meschievitz

jlmesch852@gmail.com

970-324-1550

Field Trip Coordinator

Nolan Bunting

nbunting@rams.colostate.edu

970-669-8095

Membership Chair

Harry Rose

970-430-6731

hlrose@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>

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



Coffee Consumption is Killing Birds: Here's How You Can Help

Today, 75 percent of global coffee production is farmed on destroyed forest land, or uses pesticides and fertilizers that harm wildlife. Over 2.5 million acres of rainforest have been decimated to grow coffee in Central America. Bird populations are steadily decreasing due to habitat loss, with a total decline of around 3 billion birds in North America alone since 1970. Studies show drastic biodiversity loss in agro-ecosystems without canopy cover, including reduction of native trees, epiphytes, insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals.

Coffee plants are naturally a shade-dwelling shrub, occurring in the understory of lush rainforests. Coffee was historically grown exclusively beneath forest canopy and was allowed to mature slowly. However, in 1970 the profit-driven commercial coffee industry started manufacturing strains of coffee that could be grown faster in full sunlight, with the addition of toxic chemicals.

In 1996 the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC) sought to remedy this destruction by establishing a rigorous "gold-standard" certification process at the first Sustainable Coffee Congress. This qualification process is completed by third-party agencies and involves meeting a list of specific criteria for a "Bird Friendly Farm," such as canopy cover, native plant di-



Prairie Warbler from Smithsonian Bird Friendly.

versity, USDA organic certification, and 100 percent product purity. Farmers who meet these criteria gain the additional benefits of access to gourmet markets, commercial incentives, and improve the program through contribution to research and conservation work.

Following the SMBC guidelines results in secondary ecological improvements too, like resource cultivation within the agroforest through nitrogen fixing, carbon sequestration, soil enhancement and stability, reduced water use, and extreme weather protection. They also

encourage beneficial pollination and natural pest control, which increases coffee plant yield.

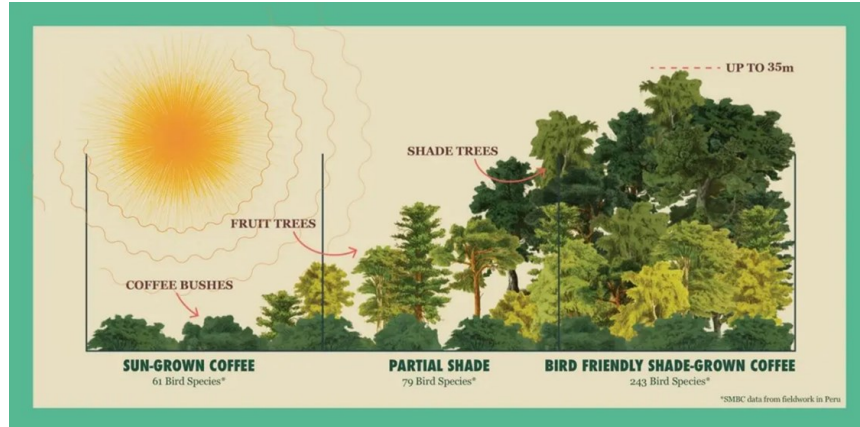
Additionally, the natural approach to growing improves conditions for workers and downstream communities. It allows opportunities for further income from co-production of medicinal plants, fruit, honey, and tim-

ber harvest through ecotourism. Plus, since shade-grown coffee produces a better tasting coffee bean, it can be sold at a premium to the consumer.

As of 2021, certified Bird-Friendly coffee farms produced 34-million pounds of coffee across 37,000 acres in Central and South America, Ethiopia, India, and Thailand. However, the "big four" large commercial roasters (Nestlé, Smucker's, Kraft, and Massimo Zanetti) purchase 2-million tons of coffee annually with less than eight percent holding any type of certification — and, admittedly, no intentions to change. Currently the only major grocery retailer to sell SMBC-certified coffee is Whole Foods.

In 2016, Cornell Lab of Ornithology surveyed nearly 1,000 birdwatchers that drink coffee about their familiarity with bird-friendly certification. Surprisingly only 49 percent considered bird habitats when purchasing coffee, only 38 percent were even aware of the SMBC seal, and only nine percent purchased it. The average consumer drinks two cups of coffee per day, equivalent to 15.5 lbs of coffee beans per year or the total harvest of two coffee bushes. With 45 million American birders, their buying power could greatly impact the coffee industry. So, when purchasing coffee, remember cheap coffee is not sustainable coffee, country of origin matters, low volume equals high quality, and your choices could save the birds.

For more information visit: [Bird Friendly® Coffee Program | Smithsonian Global \(si.edu\); Agroforestry | Smithsonian's National Zoo \(si.edu\); and Meet the Birds Supported by Bird Friendly Coffee Farms | Smithsonian's National Zoo \(si.edu\).](#)



From Smithsonian Bird Friendly.

World Migratory Bird Day 2023 — “Water: Sustaining Bird Life”

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is celebrated on the second Saturday in May, one of the peak spring migration days in the Northern Hemisphere. World Migratory Bird Day is a global campaign to celebrate the miracle of bird migration, raise awareness of the obstacles that birds face, and inspire conservation of



the world's birds. The topic highlighted for this year's campaign is “Water: Sustaining Bird Life.”

Water is crucial to migratory birds for stopover resting points along the journey back to their nesting grounds. Birds use water and associated

habitat for feeding, bathing, drinking, and cooling off in hot weather. The Important Bird Area designation given to the 20-mile stretch of the Cache La Poudre River running from Bellvue through Fort Collins is one of those important stopover points.

Because riparian areas cover less than two percent of the shortgrass steppe ecotype covering eastern Colorado, it is a unique habitat. There have been around 360 bird species recorded along the Poudre River. The beloved American Dipper is a very good indicator of water quality, needing clean, fast flowing water in which to hunt invertebrates under the riffles, and is one of the species found here.

One of the best ways we can conserve water is by planting native, xeric plants in our yards. Providing diverse native plant life increases habitat for birds along the quickly developing Front Range. Native

plant gardens help stitch habitat back together, while cutting back on the use of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and, very importantly, water. This effort can help keep water supplies healthy for future residents and wildlife by eliminating some pervasive pollutants and by cutting water use. According to the City of Fort Collins Utilities website, half of the water consumption used annually by most homes goes toward watering lawns. There is a handy Daily Lawn Watering Guide along with a link for a free sprinkler check on their website. Even

partial lawn replacement and conversion to native plant gardens can help support our birds and pollinators.

Indoor use of water can be reduced by taking shorter showers, turning water off when brushing teeth, using low-flow showerheads and toilets, and using grey water on outdoor plants. Checking for leaks in irrigation systems and fixing dripping faucets will help reduce water usage as well.

This year's World Migratory Bird Day celebration will be held at Dixon Reservoir (Pineridge Natural Area) on May 13 from 6:30 to 11 a.m. with Fort Collins Natural Areas, Northern Colorado Wildlife Center, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, and FCAS. Bird banding, bird walks, spotting scopes for waterfowl viewing, children's activities, and other adventures will take place. Please come join us in celebrating our migratory birds.



American Dipper by Sheila Webber.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Charles V. & Sheila Baker
Louise Bower
Rodney & Mary Ellner
Roberta Erickson
Susan Glenn
David Hartley
Ted Huston
Sue Kenney
Phoebe Larson
Kathleen Carty Mullen

Rosemary Rader
Jennifer Rutherford
Allison Shaw
Doug Swartz
Kevin Tempel
Thomas Trout
Pamela Turner
Robert Umbreit
Beckie Wagner
William West
Alice Wood



Thank you for your membership!



Lincoln's Sparrow by John Shenot.



Upcoming Field Trips

To register for any trip, go to Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety/>), or <http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org/>. Registration will be posted one week before the scheduled trip. Attendance is limited to 12 individuals.

Saturday, May 6, Running Deer and Cottonwood Hollow Natural Area. Leader: Sirena Brownlee, sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com, 970-980-6184. Nesting Osprey, Great Horned Owls, Killdeer and Great Blue Herons are just a few of the treasures you will see on this early morning 2-mile loop. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot.

Thursday, May 25. CSU Environmental Learning Center, Leader: Sirena Brownlee, sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com, 970-980-6184. The ELC offers a variety of habitats along the Poudre River — migrants are still arriving this time of year and it's an exciting time to see what has recently showed up. Plan for 1.5 to 2 mile walks on the trails. Meet at 6 p.m. in the parking lot.

Saturday, June 10, Well Gulch Nature Trail, Lory State Park, Leader Sirena Brownlee, sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com, 970-980-6184. This hidden



Blue Grosbeak by Doug Swartz.

gem for birding in Lory State Park boasts abundant wild plum thickets and other native shrubs that provide habitat for a variety of migrant and resident foothills birds. This walk will focus on nesting birds and native plants. In previous years we have seen nesting Cedar Waxwings, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Blue Grosbeak, and more. Meet at the Eltuck Group Picnic Area at 8 a.m. for a 1 to 2 mile moderate hike up the Well Gulch Trail. Day passes are available if you don't have a state park pass.

Wednesday, June 14, Reservoir Ridge Natural

Area. Leader: John Shenot, 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. We'll start at 7 p.m. for an early evening bird walk. A link to register for the trip will be sent a week prior. Those who sign up will be notified of where to meet.

Monday, July 10, Coyote Ridge Natural Area. Leader: Nolan Bunting, nbunting@rams.colostate.edu, 907-299-4625. Coyote Ridge is a fantastic spot to find our rare migratory resident, the Burrowing Owl, as well as other prairie birds closer to home. In addition to this raptor, there is the opportunity to see Common Raven, Northern Harrier, and various sparrows. A link to register for the trip will be sent a week prior. Those who sign up will be notified of where to meet.



Burrowing Owl
By Rob Palmer.

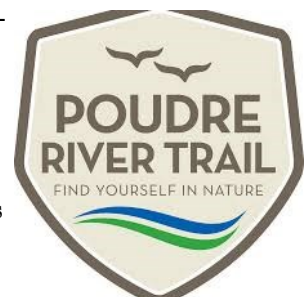
The Bobcat Ridge Survey dates through the summer are May 14, 7 a.m.; June 11, 6:30 a.m.; July 9, 6:30 a.m.; and Aug. 13, 7 a.m. Leader: Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com or 970-402-1292. The survey looks at bird populations and helps local scientists better understand bird dynamics. The little more than 4-mile hike covers moderate to flat terrain. No registration required and there is no participation limit, but please email or text Denise that you plan to attend. Meet in the Bobcat Ridge parking lot at the times listed above.

Hotspot Highlight: Poudre River Trail

This year's newsletter will include a Hotspot Highlight. The highlight will include a description of a birding hotspot, the kinds of birds you can see, and will be related to the time of year. Want to submit a suggestion or photo? Email nbunting@rams.colostate.edu.

This month's highlight is the Poudre River Trail. While many of us associate summer with suntans and shades, birds view it as a time for nesting, rearing young, and preparing for a long migration. One of the best places to observe this behavior is along the Poudre River Trail. While biking or walking, it is possible to find some amazing birds and observe their nesting

behavior. These could be anything from House Wren males showing off nests to females in May or Wood Duck ducklings taking their first dive out of a cottonwood cavity in June. Perhaps birds of prey, like the Osprey off Prospect Road, are more of an interest for you. No matter the location along the trail, you are sure to find some amazing birds and nests.



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.