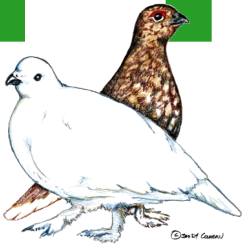


PTARMIGAN



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.

December 2023

Volume 55, Issue 9

FCAS Annual Member Potluck and Slideshow

Thursday, December 14

Set Up: 6:30; Potluck: 6:45; Announcements: 7:15; Slideshow: 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. to join the meeting virtually:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85318627615>

It's time for the annual potluck and slideshow! For the potluck, please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil and your own place setting. We will provide beverages. Set-up time will begin at 6:30 p.m. and food will be available to enjoy beginning at 6:45.

For the slideshow, bring your recent photos that you would like to share. To allow time for a number of our members to present their photos, please limit



your presentation to no longer than 10 minutes, and please just one photographer per household. Bring your slides on an USB memory device and FCAS will provide the laptop and technology to project your photos.

This will be an evening of fabulous food, fun, fellowship, and fantastic photography, so join us on Dec. 14 at the Fort Collins Senior Center. You won't want to miss it!

American Tree Sparrow
by Sheila Webber.

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.

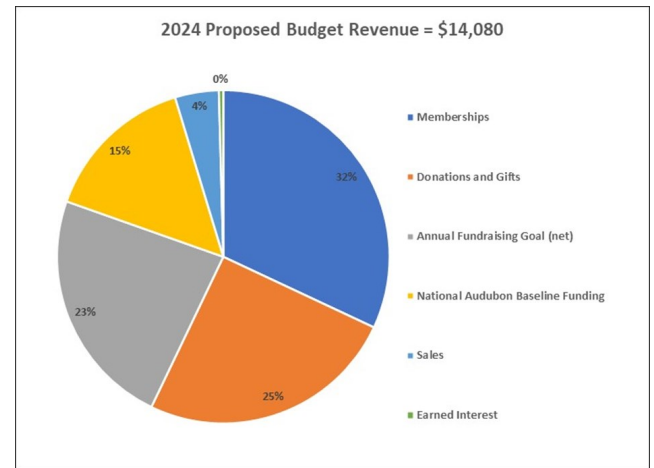
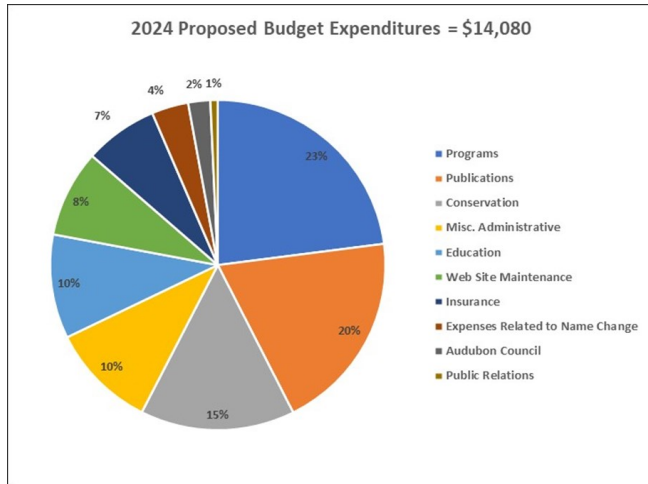
Members Vote in Support of Name Change

In October, FCAS members voted to approve the Board's recommendation to change the name of our organization, with 155 (69.2 percent) voting in favor and 69 (30.8 percent) opposed. The Board subsequently established an ad hoc name change committee that will now lead the process to determine, with input from members and others in our community, what our new name will be. More details will be shared at upcoming chapter meetings.



In keeping with our bylaws, the FCAS Board agreed in November on a proposed annual budget for our 2024 operations. Members can vote on whether to approve the budget at our annual meeting in January.

The adjoining charts summarize our proposed expenses and revenues for 2024 by category. A complete budget proposal with details on expenses and revenues is available to any member upon request. The proposed budget represents a four percent decrease in budgeted expenditures compared to 2023. Therefore, we are not proposing any increase to membership dues.



Report of the Nominating Committee on 2024 FCAS Board Candidates

In October, the FCAS Board of Directors appointed a nominating committee consisting of John Shenot (chair), Barb Patterson, and Lori Pivonka to identify candidates to serve as officers and directors on the 2024 Board. The president serves a two-year term and is not up for election this year, but all other board members serve one-year terms. In keeping with our bylaws, the nominating committee hereby announces a slate of recommended candidates to be officially nominated at our January membership meeting: President-Elect, none (still seeking a volunteer); Vice-President, Liz Pruessner; Treasurer, Joe Polazzi; Secretary, Kim Vercimak; Directors-at-Large (six positions to fill): Jay Breidt, Alan Godwin, Kit Gray, and Justin Hollis. In addition, the nominating committee has identified several excellent and willing candidates for the remaining two Directors-at-Large, but was unable to reach final decisions in time for their inclusion in this article. Those decisions will be announced at our December chapter meeting.

Additional nominations for all positions will be accepted from the floor at the January meeting. Members present will vote, and those elected will be installed at the conclusion of the meeting.

The nominating committee also identified candidates to chair our standing committees in 2024. Committee chairs are not elected; rather, they are appointed by the president with the consent of the Board. The recommended candidates are: Conservation, none (still seeking a volunteer); Membership, Harry Rose; Education, Sheila Webber; Finance, Cliff Hendrick; Programs, Jessie Meschivitz (temporary until we find a new volunteer); Field Trips, none (still seeking a volunteer); Publications, Joe Webber; Public Relations, Cassie Cranmore; Hospitality, none (still seeking a volunteer).

If you would like to fill one of the vacancies or serve as a committee member, please contact any of our current Board members or nominees.

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www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

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



Don't Call Me by Your Name: AOS Announces Changes to Eponymous Bird Names

At the beginning of November, the American Ornithological Society (AOS) announced that it will change all bird species names currently named after people within its jurisdiction. The AOS is responsible for maintaining an official list of English bird names in North and Middle America. The name change encompasses English

common bird names of 152 species determined by the AOS North American Classification Committee and 111 species determined by the South American Classification Committee. In total, 5.5 percent of all bird species overseen by the AOS will be renamed. In a press release, AOS explained that efforts beginning in 2024 will first focus on 70 to 80 names of birds found in the United States and Canada. They will establish a committee to oversee the renaming process, which will include representatives with diverse expertise. In addition, the AOS committed to involving the public in creating and selecting new bird names.

Eponyms, or species named after a person, are historically common in the ornithological world. In Larimer County, one can find eponymous bird species such as Cooper's Hawk, Lewis's Woodpecker, Steller's Jay, and Wilson's Warbler. Many of the people honored in bird names were naturalists and may have contributed to describing the species or introducing it to western science. However, some of these individuals also inflicted racism, oppression, and violence. For years, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color have voiced that these eponyms serve as a painful reminder of historical injustices, tainting an activity meant to bring joy.

Led by these impacted communities, birders campaigned the AOS to change harmful eponymous and honorific bird names. One such eponym was McCown's Longspur, a species named for naturalist and Confederate Army General John P. McCown. In 2020, in response to efforts from birders, AOS renamed McCown's

Longspur to the Thick-billed Longspur. The following year, AOS formed an ad hoc English bird names committee to investigate changing other exclusionary bird names. At first, the committee considered only changing eponyms tied to the most egregious perpetrators of oppression. However, they quickly decided they were

not entitled to make judgments as to which names are the most harmful. The committee also recognized that, aside from offensive associations, eponyms do not provide any useful information about the bird itself. Species names like Yellow-rumped Warbler and Red-tailed Hawk accurately describe traits of that species and therefore assist birders in identifying them. Ultimately, the ad hoc committee decided to change all eponyms and not to give any newly described species honorific names in the future.



Clark's Nutcracker from Macaulay Library
by David Hollie.

The AOS decision has been publicly supported by significant institutions and individuals in the bird identification world, including the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and *The Sibley Guide to Birds* by David Sibley. In an Instagram post following the announcement, Sibley wrote, "renaming all these birds for their appearance, sounds, habitat, etc. is the only viable solution. Not because all of the people were bad, but because it's impossible to determine who was 'good enough.' And simply because birds are not objects. They should not have to carry the banner for a person, no matter how good that person was."

Although relearning the names of so many birds is a daunting task for birders, the renaming also provides us with an opportunity to participate in a meaningful moment in ornithological history. Most of these birds were here long before us, and we hope that most of them will be here long after us. In the meantime, we get to do what birders do best: appreciate birds for what and who they are.

FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Kerstin Baun

Robert Beauchamp

Neal Fuller

Ruth Grant

Linda Kotsides

David Leatherman

Linda Mcnamara

Elizabeth Mojica

Gail Olson

Susan Puder

Brandi Thomas



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.



Autumn Birding in Yellowstone National Park

Autumn in Yellowstone National Park is glorious with yellow and orange foliage on the trees and bushes. Those colors and pleasant weather made this year's trip and our birding extra special. Our first bird sighting at Yellowstone was of twelve Canada Geese in Yellowstone Lake. Later we saw two Trumpeter Swans feeding in the shallows of the Yellowstone River. It was jarring to see their necks and heads daubed with muck from probing the mud for hidden sustenance in contrast to their white bodies. There were small dark ducks feeding close by the swans that I could not identify.

There were also Mallards cautiously feeding apart from the swans. Several White Pelicans flew low and slowly over the Trumpeter Swans so they could join another group of White Pelicans feeding. We also saw a female elk delicately stepping by.

Moving along to a different section of the Yellowstone



Raven by Carole Hossan.

River in the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, we saw a Clark's Nutcracker at the top of a pine tree and a Rock Wren on the ground. Remnants of an Osprey nest were noticed on the side of a cliff. We also had our first (of many) sightings of a Com-

mon Raven that ultimately became the "totem bird" on our trip. One raven had several bands on its leg. Another had the presence of an elder statesman. We also came upon a lone adolescent Osprey in a nest calling beseechingly for its parents and siblings to return. Lat-



Trumpeter Swans by Carole Hossan.

er we observed a lone Sandhill Crane flying overhead as well a Brewer's Blackbird in the geyser area. A very special sighting was seeing two Bald Eagles, one on each side of the Yellowstone River, patiently waiting for prey. A special hearing (and sighting) of a Red-tailed Hawk near Lake Yellowstone was a treat. Another treat was seeing a Double-

crested Cormorant in flight. On a previous visit we observed small birds perching on a Bison's back; I assume they were feeding on insects in its fur. My dream goal for a future visit is to see a Great Horned Owl and/or a Great Gray Owl dozing in a tree. Hearing either at night also would be great.

The Trout Lake Trail is one of our favorite destinations for hiking. It is an easy short hike. On previous visits we had not looked for birds, but during this visit we did look and saw a Lesser Scaup with many ducklings behind her, several immature Common Goldeneyes, and Mallards all on Trout Lake.

Yellowstone has several rules regarding birds in the park: 1) the use of audio bird calls is illegal in the park; 2) approaching on foot within 25 yards of wildlife, including birds, is prohibited in Yellowstone; 3) all birds are sensitive to human disturbance, especially during the nesting season; and 4) do not feed birds or any wildlife.

The following is a link for a Yellowstone seasonal bird list: <https://nps.gov/yell/learn/nature/upload/274-Bird-Checklist-2021.pdf>.

It's Time to Renew Your Membership

It is time to renew your annual membership. FCAS chapter memberships run for the calendar year from January through December. Dues are \$20 to receive the *Ptarmigan* electronically or \$30 for a printed copy through the mail. Please use the form on the back page of the newsletter to renew by mail or renew at a program meeting. You also can renew online at our website: www.fortcollinsaudubon.org. Remember, your membership and contributions are tax deductible, and help make our programs possible.



Renew



The 124th Christmas Bird Count

The 124th Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will take place from December 14 to January 5. Colorado has a long history in the CBC as it was one of the first states to host one, and Fort Collins has the longest continuous CBC in Colorado, beginning in 1947. The CBC is the longest running citizen science survey in the world; it provides critical data on bird population trends. Tens of thousands of participants know that it is a great way to make new friends and have fun! Volunteer teams cover designated areas within a 15-mile diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. Advanced birding skills are not required; beginners can be paired with more experienced birders. Volunteers who live within a count circle that just wish to record what comes to their backyard feeders also are welcome to participate; they should contact the CBC coordinator for details. To help bolster this year's involvement, FCAS will not host any December field trips aside from the Bobcat Ridge Survey. Instead, the following is information on the upcoming



ing CBC locations and compliers:

Pawnee Grasslands: Dec. 17, Nunn. Complier Robert Beauchamp, tyrannusb@gmail.com.

Fort Collins: Dec. 16. Complier Thomas Hall, redbear44@msn.com.

Rawhide Energy Station: Date to be announced; contact complier for more information. Complier Douglas Kibbe, dpkibbe@msn.com, or 303-910-9476.

Loveland: Jan. 1; contact complier for meeting location. Complier Denise Bretting, dbretting@swloveland.com or 970-402-1292.

Rocky Mountain National

Park: Date in January to be announced. Complier Scott Rashid, pygmyowl@frii.com or 970-227-9425.

Traveling for the Holidays? Visit this link to find CBCs in your travel location: <https://audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ac275eeb01434cedb1c5dcd0fd3fc7b4>

Happy holidays and happy birding to all!

Hotspot Highlight: Rocky Mountain National Park

Over the past year, we have highlighted a hotspot every month, with hotspots chosen from highlights mentioned in our field trip journal. What an amazing year it's been, full of fantastic birds and field trips. For our last bird, we have thought long and hard about what to use, and I am

excited to announce the last hotspot will be the home of our mascot, the White-tailed Ptarmigan.

This month's highlight is Rocky Mountain National Park. Though it is often known for its autumn and



White-tailed Ptarmigan from the National Parks Service.

summer birding, this area is a hotspot for many of our winter birds and wildlife, two of the most elusive being the White-tailed Ptarmigan and Canada Jay. Though birds are sparse, the views and snow makes the trip wor-

thy of just the view. Bear Creek Trail and Sprague Lake have the most biodiversity and are the best places to hike during the winter.

Bobcat Ridge Survey

Sunday, Dec. 10, 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 hike is a little more than 4 miles covering moderate to flat terrain. No registration required for this trip and there is no limit in the amount of people who can attend, but please email or text Denise that you plan to attend. Meet at 8 a.m. in the Bobcat Ridge Parking lot.

Past Field Trips

On October 4, the trip to Dixon Reservoir did not yield many bird species, but the trail was beautiful, making it a worthy trip.

On October 29 and 30, Nolan Bunting and David Leatherman led a fantastic haunted field trip for the Halloween season. Discussed were legends about common and misunderstood birds, talks on trees and, of course, owls. This trip was the most popular trip yet with over 35 people signed up, which led to adding an additional tour.



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.