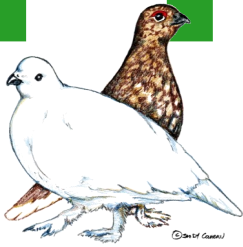


# PTARMIGAN



## 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.

April 2024

Volume 56, Issue 4

### FCAS Hosts Susan Puder

#### Environmentalist and Award-Winning Photographer

#### "Hard Birding on Weak Roads"

Thursday, April 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 be on Zoom. Enter the following link at 7 p.m. to join virtually:**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85132108920>**

Join us as we widen our Northern Colorado birding horizons and take a journey to the United Kingdom for a birding trek from the eastern coast of England to the Inner Hebrides, finishing in the Scottish Highlands. We will visit the Royal Society for the Protection of Bird Preserves, discover country villages and castles, view seabirds by the thousands, and see birds from sparrows to raptors all along the way. This ambitious trip had stops at almost three dozen top birding sites,



Robin by Susan Puder.

starting along the Suffolk coast and concluding in Inverness. Find out what made the birding hard, and what the heck "weak roads" are.

Susan Puder has been a serious nature and wildlife photographer for over 30 years. She is a dedicated environmentalist who supports the preservation of open lands and wildlife. Susan recently moved from New Jersey to Fort Collins for new birds and new adventures.

Join us on April 11 for this program that is free and open to the public.

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

### Vote for Name Change

The FCAS name change committee would like to hear your ideas! Please visit the following link before April 7 to share what's most important to you about our organization, and any name ideas you'd like us to consider: [tinyurl.com/fcasrename](https://tinyurl.com/fcasrename).



Over the years, FCAS members have benefited from a variety of amazing presentations at our monthly programs. We've heard from experts about Saw-whet Owls, bison and black-footed ferret reintroductions at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area, restoring rivers for native trout, bird-friendly gardening, the amazing and aggravating fox squirrel, and scores of other fascinating topics.

For many members, our monthly programs are the best thing FCAS has to offer. If you've enjoyed any of our guest speakers, you can thank the FCAS programs committee and especially the woman who has chaired that committee for more than 10 years: Jessie Meschievitz. The committee is responsible for brainstorming interesting topics, and recruiting expert speakers who can entertain and inform us all.

As grateful as I am for Jessie's leadership, the time has come for another volunteer to step up. Jessie has wanted to take a break from leading the program committee for three years, and I can't guarantee we will be able to offer programs next year unless we find a replacement. So, if you love our guest presentations and have ever thought, "they should do a program about \_\_\_\_\_," then please consider volunteering to chair the programs committee. And don't worry about whether

you are "qualified" — we'll help you get up to speed.

While I'm on the topic, I'm also looking for feedback from members about whether you would like our monthly programs to be more interactive. We typically start each meeting with some organizational announcements, then transition to our guest presentation, and finish with a little Q&A. Our December potluck and slide show is the only meeting that is truly member driven. Are you satisfied with that? Would you like us to build in more opportunities for members to speak up and have conversations with each other? Or do you prefer the current lecture format? Would you attend meetings if we had an interesting subject for group discussion instead of a guest presenter? You can share your thoughts with me at [johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com). Thanks!



Violet-green Swallow by Ron Harden.

## FCAS CONTACTS

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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



## Here's What Your Support Can Accomplish

Do you ever wonder if your chapter membership makes a difference? Each year the FCAS Board submits a report of the chapter's activities for the previous year to the National Audubon Society as a condition for receiving funding. It is a great opportunity to take stock of all that we do for birds and to celebrate our accomplishments.

The report covers our partnerships, programs, field trips, advocacy, conservation actions, impacts, financial status, volunteer hours, outreach, member numbers, annual goals, and more. In 2022 we had about 363 dues-paying members with an additional 972 NAS members assigned to our chapter due to living within chapter boundaries in northern Colorado. Our Board of Directors consisted of 18 outstanding individuals committed to our mission of conservation, advocacy, education, and stewardship. From that base of support, we had 55 different volunteers participating in one or more events for a total of 1,584 volunteer hours. We held nine program meetings during the year with guest speakers presenting a wide range of topics. Our field trip committee assisted with four Christmas Bird Counts and organized 34 field trips, including the very popular summer series of bird-themed talks combined with birding hikes at Lory State Park. Attendance for our programs, events, and field trips was at least 1,548 people.

An essential element of our mission is to provide birding opportunities and environmental education in the community, especially to underserved groups and school age children. The education committee led outreach efforts at over 16 events and presented programs at schools and senior living residences. There are many popular and well attended annual community-wide events that are excellent outreach opportunities for our chapter: the Poudre River Fest, International Migratory Bird Day, Wings and Wheels, Native Plant and Pol-

ination Celebration at the Gardens on Spring Creek, and the Pleasant Valley Rendezvous at Watson Lake. Partnering at these events with other organizations

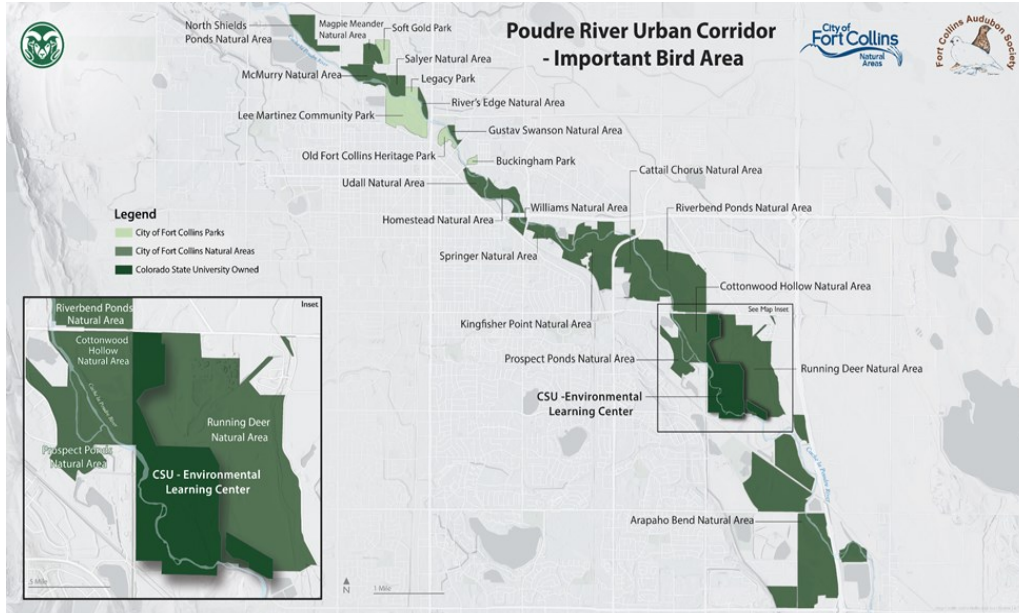
such as the Fort Collins Natural Areas, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, CSU Field Ornithologists, Larimer County Parks and Recreation, and Audubon Rockies allows us to greatly expand the impact of our efforts.

Through the leader-

ship of our Education Chair Sheila Webber and Volunteer Coordinator Barb Patterson we developed a unique partnership with the UC Health Infusion Center providing materials for bird watching, bird guides, and mindful birding kits for cancer patients receiving treatment. There is growing awareness of the health benefits of mindful birding and FCAS volunteers have been at the forefront of the movement.

One of the most important accomplishments in 2022 was the expansion of the Poudre River Urban Corridor Important Bird Area (IBA) to include CSU's Environmental Learning Center (ELC). With the addition of the critical habitat of the ELC, the Poudre River IBA stretches continuously from North Shields Pond Natural Area to the eastern reach of the river near I-25. Our Conservation Committee Chair Ellie Harrison led the effort through collaboration with the ELC staff, Fort Collins Natural Areas, and Audubon Rockies to obtain all the necessary approvals for the application to be successful.

None of this would be possible without the support of our members. This is a remarkable list for an all-volunteer organization and clear proof that your membership matters and makes a vital contribution to bird conservation in northern Colorado.



Map created by Justin Hollis and Josh Rostek.





## Sacred Birds

Birds have always been admired and sometimes envied by humans. After all, who among us would turn down a chance to fly using our own musculature? However, the Greek legend of Icarus, who defied the gods with his attempt to fly, instructs us about hubris, the excessive pride of self-confidence. Not surprisingly, birds have fared well in most cultures: swans, (symbolizing love and purity), peacocks (symbolizing beauty), and eagles (symbolizing strength and nobility). Owls have dual opposing qualities: the positive being a symbol of wisdom, fortune, and wealth; the negative personifying doom or death. Many a horror film has had the hooting of a Great Horned Owl as a precursor of oncoming doom. However, in Greece, if an owl flew over Greek soldiers, it was a sign of victory. Interestingly, the Greek euro coin has an owl on one side to symbolize knowledge. In France, if a pregnant woman hears an owl, the baby will be a girl. In Germany, if an owl hoots when a child is born, the child will live an unhappy life. In the United States, Navajo and Apache Indians consider owls a bad omen. However in Japan, owls represent good luck and fortune; *fuku*, the word for owl, translates into "luck to come."

There are some birds with sacred in their name: the Sacred Bird of Yucatan was a mythical phoenix with the power of beauty, promise, and adventures. The Sacred Kingfisher of Australasia is a beautiful bird with a buff chest, black bill, and eye stripe, with turquoise at

the edge of the wing and tail. The Sacred Ibis in Egypt is white with a black head, bill, lower back, and tail and legs. It has an extremely large range and can be found throughout most of Sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar.

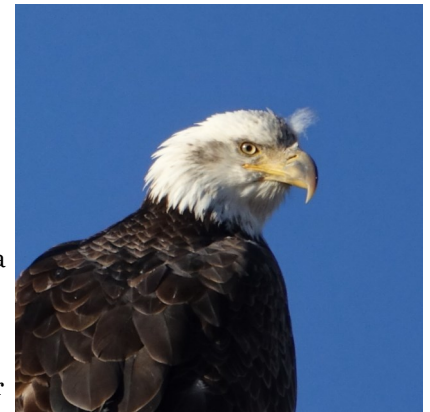
The Bald Eagle could be classified as a sacred bird to us as it is an avatar of the United States. However, according to The Franklin Institute, "the story about Benjamin Franklin wanting the national bird to be a turkey is just a myth. This false story began due to a letter Franklin wrote to his daughter



The Sacred Kingfisher of Australasia from eBird.

criticizing the original eagle design for the great seal, saying that it looked more like a turkey. In the letter, Franklin wrote that the "Bald Eagle . . . is a bird of bad moral character. He does not get his living honestly . . . he is too lazy to fish for himself."

Franklin wrote that in comparison to the Bald Eagle, the turkey is "a much more respectable bird." Happily for the United States, the Bald Eagle with its noble countenance prevailed.

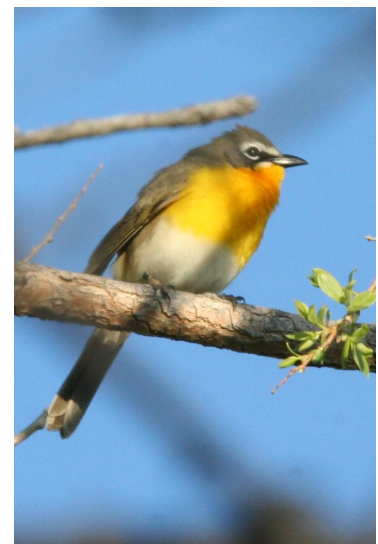
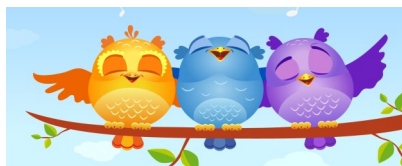


Bald Eagle by Doug Swartz.

### FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Diane Adams	Clara Komar
Elaine Burritt	Holmes Rolston III
Craig Busack	Melinda Meier
Mathew Dane	Barbara Patterson
Dirk & Jeanne Draper	Margaret Reek
Judy Holt	James Stoneberg
Adriana Jacobi	Vickie Traxler

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.



Yellow-breasted Chat by Bill Miller.



## Upcoming Field Trips

*All field trips are free and open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and/or spotting scopes. Changes to dates, meeting times, locations, and trip leaders are occasionally unavoidable. To register for any trip, please see posts at [www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety](https://www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety) or see member emails sent out 1-2 weeks in advance of each trip. Attendance may be limited. Bobcat Ridge surveys do not require registration. With questions or suggestions, please email [fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com).*

**April 14, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com) or 970-402-1292. The survey looks at bird populations and



Yellow-rumped Warbler by Evan Lopez.

helps local scientists better understand bird dynamics. The little more than 4-mile hike covers moderate to flat terrain with some steep sections. 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. in Bobcat Ridge parking lot.

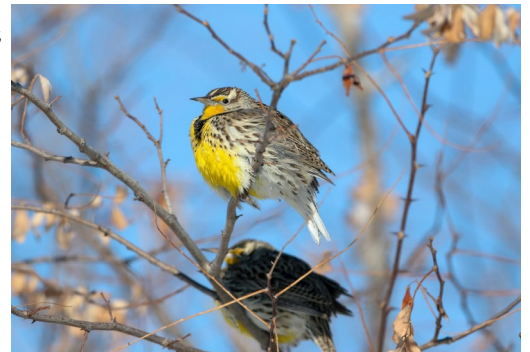
**April 13, Saturday, Watson Lake.** Leader: Ryan Twedt, [twedt@outlook.com](mailto:twedt@outlook.com). Watson Lake is well-known as a raptor and waterfowl viewing area, but it is also an incredible place to see several species of flycatchers, swallows, and if we are lucky, some migratory Wood Warblers stopping over. The trail is flat and mostly paved, but we might go off the paved path to see something good! Attendees meet at 7:30 a.m. at the larger northern parking area on the lake's east side.

**April 19, Friday, Dixon Reservoir.** Leader: Andrew Monson, [a.s.monson@gmail.com](mailto:a.s.monson@gmail.com) or 970-

795-2790. Meet at the Dixon Reservoir upper parking lot at 7:15 a.m. and we will explore various sections of the area, searching for regulars like Western Meadowlarks and Spotted Towhees, while also keeping hopeful for migrating arrivals like Orange-crowned Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Brown-headed Cowbirds. This outing will involve some hiking of uneven ground and moderate inclines at times (at a relaxed pace).

**April 28, Sunday, LGBTQIA+ and allies at Lee Martinez Park.** Leader: Kit Gray, [kit@kitgrayillustration.com](mailto:kit@kitgrayillustration.com). Come join us for a relaxed bird walk with good company! Beginners are welcome, but bring binoculars if you have them. The group will meet by the parking lot at 8 a.m. and walk along the mostly paved trails near the Poudre River. **Call for Field Trip Leaders**

Birders, nature enthusiasts, and conservationists: would you like to share your knowledge and experience with the FCAS? Have ideas for locations or new field trip themes? If you have an idea for a field trip or would like to lead, contact field trip committee chair Amy Roush at [fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com).



Western Meadowlark by Susan Hodge.



Sandhill Cranes near Kearny, Nebraska by Luke Martin.



Fort Collins Audubon Society  
PO Box 271968  
Fort Collins, CO 80527-1968



Printed on recycled paper

## 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).