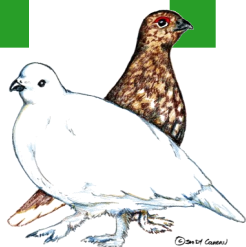


# PTARMIGAN



## 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.

January 2024

Volume 56, Issue 1

### FCAS Hosts

**Ted Floyd: Editor, Author, Avid Birder, and Educator**

**Presenting "Stealth Birds"**

**Thursday, January 11, 2024**

**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 Twinberry Auditorium, 1200 Raintree Dr.**

**This program also will be on Zoom. Enter the following link to join the meeting virtually:**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86745414909>**

Ted Floyd asks: "Who among us doesn't thrill at the sight of a dazzling Western Tanager in the pinewoods, or a brilliant Wood Duck on a fine fall morning, or a Peregrine Falcon blasting across the sky?" For sure, those species are a huge part of the draw of bird watching, but what about the birds that go about their business without our even noticing them? In this presentation, lifelong birder Ted Floyd will make the case for the little brown jobs and little gray jobs that, if we just reorient our thinking a bit, are the greatest birds of all!

Ted Floyd is the editor of *Birding* magazine, the award-winning flagship publication of the American



Bushtit by Ted Floyd.

Birding Association. He has written five bird books, including the *Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America* (Harper Collins, 2008) and *How to Know the Birds* (National Geographic, 2019). Ted is also the author of more than 200 popular articles, technical papers, and book chapters on birds and nature. He is especially interested in analyzing bird vocalizations, in interpreting birds and nature for children and beginners, and in applying new media and

emerging technologies toward the appreciation of nature. Don't miss Ted Floyd's presentation on "Stealth Birds" — it will be stellar, so join us on January 11 for this free program. 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](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org).

First, I want to remind members that our January program will begin with our official annual meeting. The members present will vote on whether to approve a 2024 budget drafted by the outgoing Board and will vote on the officers and directors-at-large that will serve on the Board in 2024. Our Nominations Committee identified the following officer candidates: Liz Pruessner (vice president), Joe Polazzi (treasurer), and Kim Vercimak (secretary). The position of president serves two-year terms and is not up for election this time. The identified candidates for directors-at-large are Jay Breidt, Alan Godwin, Kit Gray, Justin Hollis, Sabrina Jones, and Lori Pivonka. Additional nominations for any of these positions can be made by any member present at the meeting.

Second, I want to spread the word that we are still looking for a person to chair our Programs Committee. That committee is responsible for recruiting the guest speakers that deliver presentations at our monthly programs and coordinating logistics for the programs. We have a good group of volunteers to help with this committee, but are looking for a new chairperson. Experience is not required; we will train and help you get up to speed. We are also looking to find volunteers who are willing to bring light refreshments to one of our 2024 programs. The chapter will cover all expenses. We hope to find eight volunteers who will each cover one of our eight programs. Please

notify me ([johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com)) ASAP if either of these ways of volunteering interests you!

### Access to Timnath Reservoir for Birding

Timnath Reservoir is one of the top birding destinations in all of Colorado, with 270 different bird species observed there throughout the years. However, I frequently get questions about access to the



View over Timnath Reservoir from North Forty News.

property because signs at the Timnath Town Park entrance and information on the town website state that access is for permit holders only. I have some good news to share about that.

But first, some background. The Town of Timnath has a lease agreement with the water company that owns Timnath Reservoir that allows for recreational uses on the water and shoreline. The town adopted a policy limiting those uses to permit holders. Town residents can get an annual shore use permit for free, but must pay to obtain a permit for boating. All others must pay to obtain a permit for shore use or boating – with one important exception.

FCAS secured an informal agreement with the Town's Parks and Recreation Department that allows FCAS members to have free access without a permit to the reservoir shoreline, including the park on the southwest side of the reservoir, for wildlife viewing (including birding) only. If a town employee asks to see your permit, tell them you are a member of FCAS and you will be allowed access for birding, but not for boating, fishing, dog walking, disc golf, or any activity other than wildlife viewing. You will not have to show proof that you are an FCAS member.

If for any reason a town employee insists you need a permit, please don't argue with them. Be respectful, leave the area as requested, and notify FCAS so we can try to fix the problem. Access by a non-town resident is a privilege, not a right, and it is important that all of us follow the rules and observe good birding ethics if we want this privilege to continue.

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Visit us on Facebook:

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





## Take Action for Conservation in the New Year

Looking for a way to use your voice for conservation right where you live? There are plenty of opportunities in Larimer County and our northern Colorado communities. Larimer County is seeking input on priorities for managing the open space lands and trails through a survey that updates information gathered in a 2013 study called “Our Lands, Our Future.” Since a decade has passed, it’s time for a fresh look regarding use of tax dollars from the existing “Help Preserve Open Space” one-quarter cent sales tax passed by citizens that funds projects to maintain and conserve open space, natural areas, trails, wildlife habitat, rivers, and county parks. The sales tax will eventually sunset in 2043 and the county wants to find out how people are using open space and trails now to make the best use of this important funding resource for the future. The monies are shared with the cities of Fort Collins, Loveland, Berthoud, Estes Park, Johnstown, Timnath, and Wellington for county open space projects, not city parks, golf courses, ball parks or sports complexes. Over 56,000 acres of open space land have been preserved by Larimer County in a total of 13 sites for recreation and habitat conservation.

There is more information on the goals of the survey on the county website: <https://www.larimer.gov/spotlights/2023/11/30/call-public-input-regarding-future-open-space-northern-colorado-0>. The survey is being conducted by RRC Associates, which is the same company that managed the first study. Given the rate of growth in northern Colorado it is critical that we continue our successful track record of land conservation and preservation.

As a member of FCAS, it is important to speak up for birds, the natural world, and the activities and spaces we treasure. Your views matter! To participate in the survey go to: [https://rrcassociates.sjcl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_727pNu7WYWiAl5c?src=2](https://rrcassociates.sjcl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_727pNu7WYWiAl5c?src=2)



**Red Mountain Open Space**  
from Larimer County/Natural Resources.

If you’d like to get involved in shaping policy and advising local leadership, consider applying for a volunteer position on a board or commission. Larimer County has openings on the Planning Advisory Committees for the Laporte area and Estes Valley. Openings for other boards occur throughout the year. To learn more about these opportunities go to: <https://www.larimer.gov/boards>.

The City of Fort Collins is seeking applicants for a wide range of boards including the Land Conservation and Stewardship Board, Natural Resources Advisory Board, Air Quality Advisory Board, Parks and Recreation Board, and many others. The city is accepting applications through January 15, 2024. The terms run two to four years and applicants must live within the Growth Management Area of Fort Collins. For more info see: <https://www.fcgov.com/cityclerk/boards/>

Serving on a board is a great way to share your expertise and make an impact in your community. Our former chapter president, Bill Miller, served on the Fort Collins Natural Resources Advisory Board when the idea for creating

the natural areas was developed. Imagine life in northern Colorado without our natural areas and open space! Start the New Year off with positive steps by taking action for conservation.



**Ramsay-Shockey Open Space – Adjacent to Pinewood Reservoir** from Larimer County/Natural Resources.

## 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](http://www.fortcollinsaudubon.org). Remember, your membership and contributions are tax deductible, and help make our programs possible.



**Renew**



## You Think You Know Turkeys

Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) are possibly the most easily recognized bird in North America. More than being everyone's favorite holiday bird, however, Wild Turkeys are a unique and fascinating species to study.

There are only two species of Wild Turkey: the North American Wild Turkey and the Ocellated Turkey in Central America. The North American Wild Turkey has five distinct subspecies, two of which are found here in Colorado: the native Merriam's Turkey (*M. g. merriami*), and the Rio Grande Turkey (*M. g. intermedia*), which was introduced to riparian corridors on the Eastern Plains of Colorado in the 1980s.

Named for the first chief of the U.S. Biological Survey, Clinton Hart Merriam, the Merriam's Turkey is the bird we see in Northern Colorado, and is easily distinguished from the other subspecies by the nearly white feathers on its lower back and tail feather margins, and other markings. Males reach about four feet tall and weigh in around 20–25 pounds. Females are about half that size and weight.

As omnivores, Wild Turkeys consume a variety of nuts, seeds, fruits, tubers, flower heads, green leaves, and insects. Adult males are called a Tom, a female is a hen, and baby turkeys are poults. A female poult is a Jenny, and a male is a Jake.

Fleshy, wrinkled folds of skin hanging from a bird's face or neck are called wattles, and the flap of skin fall-

ing over the beak of the male is a snood. Depending on the bird's emotions, the wattles can change color quickly, going from pink or red to white or blue. Males have larger wattles than females, and a male with larger, brighter wattles may be more dominant in the flock and have more breeding success. Males also sport "beards,"

dark plumes of hair-like feathers jutting from their chest, although some females sport beards, too, albeit smaller ones.

Turkeys have excellent eyesight, can see in color and have a 270-degree field of vision. They are good fliers, fast runners and, when necessary, can swim by tucking their wings in close, spreading their tails, and kicking.

By the early 20th century, Wild Turkey numbers throughout North America plummeted due to overhunting and habitat loss. Game managers and conservationists initially sought to reintroduce the bird by releasing farm turkeys into the wild, but they did not survive. By the 1940s, Wild Turkeys were being caught and transported to other regions of the country, which allowed them to rebound. They now thrive not only in rural areas, but

suburban environments as well.

Although a conservation success story, a sharp decline in Wild Turkey populations in the Northeast, Midwest, and Southeast have been reported, although the cause is yet to be determined.



Male/female Merriam's from the National Wild turkey Federation.

## FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Dorthy L. Adel  
Dale Agger  
Geoff Baker  
Melanie Barnett  
Mary Beck  
Lisa Browne  
James Bruening  
Leslie Cancilla  
Linda Cashman  
Judith F. Christy  
Red Kite Creative  
William Cushman  
Cynthia Decrescentis  
James & Ruth DeMartini  
Georgia Doyle

Irene Fortune  
Alan Godwin  
Andrew Goris  
Kathleen M. Hardy  
Clifford Hendrick  
Nancy Hill  
Neil & Kate Holstein  
Steven Irizarry  
Gina Janett  
Carla Johns  
Nancy Jones  
Barbara Krupnik-Goldman  
Alora LaVoy  
Henry Thode III  
Robin Long

Jane M. Low  
Karen Manci  
Laura Martin  
Connie Marvel  
Marguerite Mathews  
William McIntyre  
Jessie Meschievitz  
Connie Ohlson  
Elizabeth Perna  
Phil Phelan  
Elizabeth Pruessner  
Deanna Richardson  
Richard Roberts  
David Robertson  
Harry Rose

Ingrid & Mark Rosoff  
Joel Ryan  
John Shenot  
Frederick Snyder  
Linda Squires  
Jeff Stewart  
John Stroup  
Donna Stump  
Sheila Webber  
Peter Weckesser  
Robin S. Welsh  
Karen Wheeler  
Roger Wieck  
Sandra Winkler



Thank you for your membership!





## Upcoming Field Trips

All field trips are free (unless otherwise noted) and are currently open to the public. All experience levels are welcome. Bring snacks or lunch, water, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Changes to dates, meeting times, locations, and trip leaders are occasionally unavoidable. To register for any trip, please visit [www.facebook.com/groups/123106328705](https://www.facebook.com/groups/123106328705) or [fortcollinsaudubon.org](https://fortcollinsaudubon.org) to register. Attendance may be limited. 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.

**Jan. 6, Saturday, St. Louis Natural Area.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com) or 970-402-1292; and Andrew McFadden. Even in the dead of winter, a tiny bit of marshy open water hosts an interesting variety of birds such as an Eastern Phoebe seen last year and many wading birds. St. Louis is a newer natural area for the City of Loveland. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot (on S. St. Louis Ave., about a quarter mile north of Hwy. 402 that runs on the south side of Loveland, also known as 14th Street). No street parking is allowed there. Access is available on the north side of the natural area from the Mirasol neighborhood, but parking is limited and the neighborhood is not an "official" entry into the natural area. There's a nice loop trail, and a bit of the natural area is on the northern side of the Big Thompson River. Field trip is limited to 10 people due to the small amount of parking.

**Jan. 13, Saturday, Lee Martinez Park.** Leader: Nolan Bunting, [nbunting@rams.colostate.edu](mailto:nbunting@rams.colostate.edu) or 907-299-4625. Join us for a short half-mile to mile-long trip

around the Poudre River to look for resident waterfowl, song birds, and maybe spot a few of the winter raptors. Meet at the parking lot off of Sherwood Street at 8 a.m.



Eastern Phoebe by Robert Brian Rivera.

**Jan. 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 helps local scientists better understand bird dynamics. The little more than four-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 at 8 a.m. in Bobcat Ridge parking lot.

**Jan. 20, Saturday, Rigden Reservoir.** Leader: Robert Beauchamp, [tyrannusb@gmail.com](mailto:tyrannusb@gmail.com). We'll meet at Rigden Reservoir (Arapahoe Bend Natural Area) on Friday at 8 a.m. and take a leisurely 1.5 – 2.0 mile walk where we will explore the reservoir and nearby riparian habitat.

### Thank you from Nolan Bunting

Hello everyone. I want to thank you all for allowing me to coordinate FCAS's field trips for the last few years. We have seen a lot, from Common Nighthawks to Bald Eagles. We travelled out to the prairies and up into the mountains. I am saddened to leave this part of my life behind. To the field trip leaders, I wanted to thank you all for making field trips possible, and for working with me through Covid protocols, and the amazing increase in birding interest. You are all amazing and I hope you continue to be field trip leaders for years to come. To the board, I have really enjoyed working with everyone and have learned so much from all of you and your experiences. I will not be leaving Fort Collins and plan to transition to leading field trips more than coordinating them. Congratulations to my successor, Amy Roush. Please welcome her the way you all welcomed me.



### CBC Thank You

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 124th Christmas Bird Count. Your contributions help form conservation policies, monitor changes in bird populations, and promote conservation of the birds we all love. We hope to see you all for the 125th CBC.



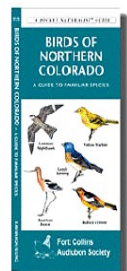
### FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

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



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).