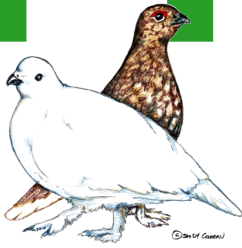


# PTARMIGAN



## 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.

October 2024

Volume 56, Issue 7

### FCAS Hosts

David Suddjian, Chair, Denver Field Ornithologists

“Get Ready for Late Fall Birding”

Thursday, October 10

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 is also accessible using Zoom. Enter the following link at 7 p.m. to join the meeting virtually: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86720068146>



Broad-winged Hawk  
by Gary Witt.

David Suddjian will help us tune up and get ready to identify and enjoy the special birds of late autumn. Fall migration is broad, spanning July to December, and the last part of the migration season brings special birds we Colorado birders love to see.

Loons, scoters, geese and other returning waterfowl, hawks, gulls, sparrows, and more are

thologists' field trip program, and has led over 500 birding trips to places all over Colorado. David's “Bird Bombs” webinars are very popular among new and experienced birders.

Join us on October 10 for David Suddjian to “Get (Us) Ready for Late Fall Birding.” This program is free and the public is welcome!



White-winged Scoter  
by Robert Raker.



Red-throated Loon by Robert Raker.

highlights of the late fall season.

David Suddjian is the chair of the Denver Field Orni-

**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).

Fort Collins Audubon has no paid staff. We rely on an all-volunteer Board of Directors to manage every aspect of the organization. In keeping with our bylaws, the Board consists of five officers and six directors-at-large, who are elected by the members, along with nine committee chairs who are appointed by the chapter president. Every year, in January at our annual meeting, we elect and appoint a new Board of Directors (except that we only elect a new president every other year).

As we do each October, we are forming a Nominations Committee to identify candidates for serving on the Board of Directors in 2025. I want to encourage any FCAS member who might entertain the idea of serving on the Nominations Committee to contact me immediately. We have to announce the members of the committee at our chapter meeting on October 10.

Perhaps even more importantly, if you have any interest in serving as a Board member in 2025, or are even just curious about it, or know someone you think would be a good candidate, please contact me at your earliest convenience. I'm always happy to bring new faces to the leadership of FCAS and will gladly answer your questions about the roles we need to fill and what it takes to serve. The most important things for any potential Board candidate to know are that FCAS is financially strong, has stable membership numbers, and has a superb Board of Directors sharing the

load of running the organization. Also, rest assured that you don't have to be an expert birder or have experience leading any type of organization. New board members will get a lot of

coaching and help in whatever role they assume.

One more thing: I am nearing the end of 10 consecutive years as president of FCAS. I still enjoy serving in this role, but it would probably be healthy for the organization if someone else with energy and fresh ideas took the helm for a couple of years. So, to be clear, if we can find a good leader who is willing to serve as president, I will gladly step down and serve the organization in some other way!



### Name Change Update

In October 2023, a super-majority (nearly 70 percent) of FCAS members voted in favor of a resolution to change the name of

our organization to something that isn't specific to Fort Collins and doesn't contain the name Audubon. (Refer to <https://fortcollinsaudubon.org/namechangeresolution/adopted.php>.) Throughout 2024, an ad hoc Name Change Committee has been brainstorming potential new names, with input from our members and the broader public, and screening all the suggestions to find the best options. The committee presented a list of possible new names that satisfied all the screening criteria to the Board of Directors in September. Very soon, in keeping with the October 2023 resolution, we will ask our members to vote on our new name. The candidate names and details on the voting procedure will be announced at our October 10 chapter meeting, followed shortly thereafter by an online election. We should, hopefully, have a new name that is broadly supported by our members before the end of the year.



#### FCAS CONTACTS

##### President

John Shenot

802-595-1669

[johnshenot@gmail.com](mailto:johnshenot@gmail.com)

##### Vice President

Liz Pruessner

970-484-4371

[lizpru@colostate.edu](mailto:lizpru@colostate.edu)

##### Program Chair

Jessie Meschievitz

[jlmesch852@gmail.com](mailto:jlmesch852@gmail.com)

970-324-1550

##### Field Trip Coordinator

Amy Roush

[fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com)

512-993-0242

##### Membership Chair

Harry Rose

970-430-6731

[hlrose@toadaway.net](mailto:hlrose@toadaway.net)

##### Publications/Newsletter

Joe Webber

[Joe.Webber26@gmail.com](mailto:Joe.Webber26@gmail.com)

720-345-4757

For other FCAS contacts visit

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

Visit us on Facebook:

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



## A Paradox in Conservation: Saving Big Cats to Protect Little Birds

As Colorado voters prepare to weigh in on Initiative 91, which seeks to prohibit the hunting of bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions, there's an interesting paradox to consider: protecting these large predators, which might seem like a threat to other wildlife, can actually benefit bird populations.

Bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions rarely hunt small birds. Their diets primarily consist of mammals like rabbits, hares, and small deer. While bobcats might occasionally catch a ground-nesting bird, birds are not their main prey. Instead, the benefits for birds come from these big cats' impact on the ecosystem — specifically through controlling smaller predators and herbivores.

Large predators like mountain lions and bobcats play a role in regulating the populations of smaller carnivores, such as raccoons, foxes, and even coyotes, many of which are more likely to prey on birds or their eggs. By preying on these mesopredators (a predator that occupies a mid-ranking trophic level in a food web) or altering their behavior, apex



Bobcat in Lory State Park by Joseph Webber.

species, like ground-nesting birds, some relief.

Additionally, the benefits of large predators extend beyond controlling other carnivores. They also regulate herbivore populations, such as deer and elk. Without predators to keep herbivores in check, either through

direct predation or the fear effect, overgrazing can lead to a loss of vegetation, which is critical for birds that rely on dense plant cover for nesting and foraging. Predators help maintain the balance, ensuring that vegetation can regenerate and continue to provide these essential resources for birds.

Opponents of Initiative 91 argue that Colorado Parks and Wildlife currently regulates predator hunting to ensure sustainable ecosystems, and that a ban could lead to higher popula-

tions of predators, increasing risks to livestock, pets, and people. They also suggest that wildlife management should be driven by experts who can make science-based decisions, including the use of hunting as a tool for controlling predator populations.

While these concerns are important to consider, research indicates that predator populations are unlikely to grow unchecked if hunting is banned. On the contrary, evidence is abundant that the presence of large predators helps prevent the overpopulation of both smaller carnivores and herbivores, helping to maintain the balance of ecosystems that birds and other wildlife depend on.

The Audubon community is one founded in the conservation of not just birds, but also the habitats they rely on. Protecting native predators is an integral part of this mission, as fostering a balanced and healthy environment benefits all wildlife, including the little birds we cherish.



Bobcat hoping for a meal by Cindy Goeddel.

predators indirectly reduce the pressure on bird populations. This effect is part of what ecologists refer to as the "ecology of fear," where the presence of larger predators causes smaller predators to adjust their behavior, thus giving vulnerable

## FCAS Fall Fund Raiser – Donations Wanted for Book and Art Sale at November Meeting

Fort Collins Audubon will be conducting a book and art sale fund raiser at our November 14 Program Meeting, featuring special guest speaker Nick Komar presenting "A Big Year in the USA and its Territories." The meeting starts an hour early at 6:00 pm to provide plenty of time for shopping before the program. We are seeking donations of new and/or gently used bird guides, nature books, animal artwork, bird plates and figurines, your own home crafted bird houses, anything

you no longer need and think other nature lovers would enjoy and treasure. Clean out your home and support your chapter! Bring your donations to the October 10 program meeting at the Senior Center. Or contact Liz Pruessner to arrange the transfer of your donations. 970-215-3409; [lizpru@colostate.edu](mailto:lizpru@colostate.edu).





## Birding While Hiking

Hiking is my favorite method of birding. I always have my small Canon SX740HS camera within easy reach to visually capture interesting plants, rocks, water features, hiking companions, and my favorite category: wildlife. My hikes in early September were at Zimmerman Lake in the Cache la Poudre Canyon, Running Deer Natural Area (RDNA) in Fort Collins, and Bierstadt Lake in Rocky Mountain National Park. My most recent hike at Zimmerman Lake's landscape in the Neota Wilderness was beginning to flaunt autumn colors. It also gave us the treat of viewing a Bald Eagle flying overhead as well as a Red-breasted Nuthatch, Common Mergansers, and a flotilla of female Mallards. (Where were the males?). While eating our lunches we did have a visit from a female Mallard who presented herself and



Common Mergansers by Carole Hossan.

was determined to get her share. She was obviously a pro.

Back in Fort Collins we are especially lucky to often view the Eastern Screech-Owl napping in its cavity near Old

Town, and the Bald Eagles sitting on top of power poles at RDNA. At RDNA we are also fortunate to see Belted Kingfishers, Killdeer, Northern Flickers, Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels, Mourning Doves, Red-breasted Nuthatches, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Cooper's Hawks. My favorite bird at RDNA is the brown female Northern Harrier (the male is gray); sadly however, I have not seen a Northern Harrier there (or anywhere) for years. I did see a Wild Turkey feather the last time I visited as well as a friendly mayfly that posed on fellow hiker Harry Rose's finger. There was also an adolescent Osprey forlornly sitting alone on top of the platform near the abandoned nest wondering

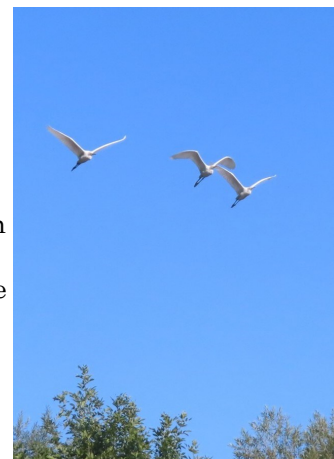
where its family went.

Another early September adventure occurred on the walk/bike path in Fort Collins near the Poudre River. We were fortunate to view three Great Egrets in flight over-

head as well as three adolescent Wild Turkeys walking about and occasionally feeding. Their naked heads made them look very reptilian yet vulnerable. It reminded me of the time that a very large Snapping Turtle was near the Poudre for a while. We also noticed an omnivorous Black-capped Chickadee searching for insects on leaves. And, of course, we saw the usual suspects — Canada Geese and the Great Blue Heron lurking about. And then there are the ubiquitous House Finches, European Starlings, Blue Jays, and House Sparrows. On a different note, I often think about birds in my neighborhood with its enormous front yard cottonwood trees that I do not see or hear anymore: the Great Horned Owl, the Eastern Screech-Owl, plus the scary rasp of and swirling alley night flight of the ghostly Barn Owl. Maybe on Halloween night — it's coming up.



Canada Jay by Carole Hossan.



Great Egrets by Carole Hossan.

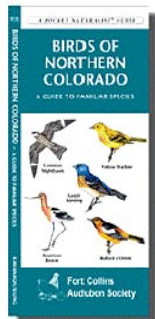
### FCAS Pocket Guide to Local Birds

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



### FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members



Crissy Carroll  
Cooper Farr  
Rozanne Junker



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.



## 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 one to two weeks in advance of each trip. Attendance may be limited. Bobcat Ridge surveys do not require registration. With questions, suggestions, or interest in leading trips about nature conservation topics, please email [fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com).



Eared Grebe by  
Claudio Contreras-Koob.

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 with some steep sections. No registration required and there is no participation limit, but please



Bald Eagle by Ron Harden.

[wren4@gmail.com](mailto:wren4@gmail.com) or 512-993-0242. We will meet at the Willow Landing parking area (farthest north within Boyd Lake State Park) and follow the Boyd Lake Trail to the north following the shore of the lake. This is a good place to see shorebirds, and we may see eagles perched on nearby power poles. The trail is a wide, well-maintained, paved concrete surface, mostly flat aside from an incline near the parking area, and the area is typically quiet with occasional bicycle traffic. The trip will start at 9 a.m. and last for about two hours. Addi-

**Oct. 12, Saturday, Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area.** Leader: Sirena Brownlee, [sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com](mailto:sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com).

Join Sirena for a walk on the Cattail Flats trail to view late fall migrating and resident waterfowl, and hopefully a few raptors. Plan for a 2-mile walk on the trails. All levels are welcome, and a spotting scope will be available. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot.

**Oct. 13, Sunday, Bobcat Ridge Survey.** Leader: Denise Bretting, [dbretting@swloveland.com](mailto:dbretting@swloveland.com) or

email or text Denise that you plan to attend. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in Bobcat Ridge parking lot.

**Oct. 19, Saturday, Accessible Field Trip at Boyd Lake State Park.** Leaders: Sheila Webber, [13sheilaw@gmail.com](mailto:13sheilaw@gmail.com), and Amy Roush, [tional details will be sent via email, Facebook, and other channels. With any questions or to express interest, please contact field trip committee chair Amy Roush at \[fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com\]\(mailto:fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com\) or 512-993-0242.](mailto:canyon</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

**Oct. 20, Sunday, October 20, LGBTQIA+ and Allies at Pineridge Natural Area.** Leader: Kit Gray, [kit@kitgrayillustration.com](mailto:kit@kitgrayillustration.com). FCAS is committed to providing a safe space where queer birders and allies of all ages can connect with each other and learn about local bird species. Come join us for a relaxed bird walk with good company! Meet at 8 a.m. at Pineridge Natural Area. The walk will last about two hours. Sign up for LGBTQIA+ walk at Pineridge Natural Area here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CADA2CA1FEC70-50838007-lgbtqia#/>

**Oct. 26 & 27, Saturday and Sunday, Grandview Cemetery.** Leaders: Nolan Bunting, [nbunting@rams.colostate.edu](mailto:nbunting@rams.colostate.edu) or 907-299-4625, and Dave Leatherman, [daleatherman@msn.com](mailto:daleatherman@msn.com). Prepare for a

spooky trip just before dusk at the Grandview cemetery. The trip will be 1.5 hours long and will include some mild walking through one of Fort Collins' hidden birding locations. We may see owls, Brown Creepers, and perhaps



Brown Creeper by Roseanne Caleca.

stumble upon a murder of crows. Additionally, there will be stories about some of the well-known ghosts and hauntings that are said to happen in the cemetery. The trip will begin at 5 p.m. and will conclude at dusk. Meet at the Mountain Ave entrance near City Park. Please bring a headlamp and flashlight. Registration will be increased to 15 for this trip. Additional cemetery trips may be added if demand is high. Register for the Saturday, Oct. 26 trip at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CADA2CA1FEC70-51449059-sept#/>; or the Sunday, Oct. 27 trip at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CADA2CA1FEC70-51449058-sept#/>.



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).