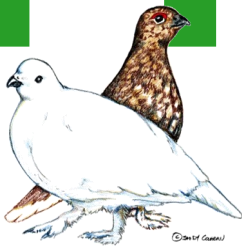


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FORT COLLINS AUDUBON SOCIETY

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.

February 2025

Volume 57, Issue 2

FCAS Hosts Kaitlyn Parkins

Glass Collisions Program Coordinator, American Bird Conservancy

Presenting: "Clear Solutions: Preventing Bird-Window Collisions"

Thursday, February 13

Social Time with Refreshments: 7 p.m.; Announcements: 7:20; Presentations: 7:30

Door Prize Drawing (must be present to win)

Fort Collins Senior Center, Twinberry Auditorium

(Due to construction, enter Senior Center through North Entrance)

1200 Raintree Dr., Fort Collins

This program will be accessible on Zoom. Enter the following link at 7 p.m. to join the meeting virtually: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88210227742>

Have you ever heard the unmistakable "thud" of a bird striking a window and rushed to its aid? Or perhaps you've come across a stunned bird on a city sidewalk? You're not alone. In the United States, as many as one billion birds lose their lives to window collisions annually. The good news? There are effective ways to prevent these tragedies — from simple fixes at home to promoting bird-friendly policies in your area. American Bird Conservancy's Kaitlyn Parkins will discuss the reasons behind bird-window collisions, the most effective strategies for preventing



Ruby-crowned Kinglet by Kaitlyn Parkins.

them, how bird-friendly materials are tested and rated, and ways to support initiatives for safer, bird-friendly building designs in your community.

Kaitlyn Parkins is the Glass Collisions Program Coordinator at American Bird Conservancy, where she works to reduce bird-window collisions through education, outreach, glass testing, and policy solutions. Join us for this informative program. 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.

I want to use this month's column to explain what went wrong at our January program and apologize to any members who tried to attend via Zoom and were unable to join us.

As I was setting up all the gear for our usual combined in-person and Zoom meeting, and just about when I was thinking to myself that things were going unusually smoothly, I discovered a few minutes before start time that the Zoom link we published in our newsletter, on our website, and on our social media channels was wrong. It took me a couple of minutes to figure out that the last number in the link got cut off. It took a couple more minutes for me to find a file on my laptop that had the email addresses of many of our members. I sent a quick message to those people with the correct Zoom link and hoped for the best.

Some folks clearly got the message, as more than 30 people ended up attending the program via Zoom. But I have no doubt some people who were excited to hear Ted Floyd's excellent presentation on Cooper's Hawks didn't see my emergency email, couldn't get into the meeting, and were disappointed. I'm sorry about that.

For future programs, we are initiating additional quality control measures to make sure nothing like this happens again. We also would welcome assistance from any volunteers who have professional IT, audio/visual,

or meeting planning expertise. And this is a good time to remind members that we record our guest presentations, provided we have permission from the guest speaker, and post the recordings on our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@fortcollinsaudubon8123>). If you missed Ted Floyd or any of our other recent guest speakers, that's the place to go!



From iStock.

Great Backyard Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual birding and citizen science event for people of all skills from around the world. The 28th edition of the GBBC starts Friday, February 14 and runs through Monday, February 17. Participants are asked to watch and count birds in their backyards or any other location for at least 15 consecutive minutes, then submit a checklist of their observations on a website.

Last year, an estimated 640,000 GBBC participants around the world submitted 380,000 checklists and reported nearly 8,000 bird species! In Larimer County 112 species were reported on 668 checklists and in Weld County, 64 species on 115 checklists.

Please consider participating in this year's GBBC. Even your observations of House Finches at a backyard bird feeder can contribute to better scientific understanding of bird distribution and abundance. More information about the GBBC and how to submit checklists can be found at <http://birdcount.org/>.

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Preserving Wildlife Corridors

Roads and wildlife do not mix. Major highways cut across wildlife migration corridors all over the United States causing untold harm to people, animals, and vehicles. There is growing recognition that building structures over and under roadways to allow safe passage of wildlife is a huge benefit for human and animal safety, and a wise investment for transportation planners at all



Wildlife camera confirms deer using wildlife crossing under the roadway. Photo: CSU Warner College website.

levels of government. Colorado has made preserving wildlife corridors a priority by developing state and federal partnerships to capitalize on funding for building large scale projects on major highways. The stretch of I-25 between Denver and Colorado Springs is especially hazardous with at least one animal-vehicle collision per day. The I-25 South Gap wildlife mitigation project includes four new and one refurbished underpasses; 28 miles of deer fencing, deer guards, and jump-outs; and has resulted in an estimated 90 percent reduction in collisions. The state recently secured \$22 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation for the Greenland Overpass to be built across I-25 near Larkspur, connecting 39,000 acres of open space and providing safe passage for wildlife to move from the plains to the mountains. Wildlife cameras reveal bear, elk, deer, pronghorn, mountain lion, bobcat, and many other small mammals using the structures, demonstrating the value and success of this large project.

Conservation efforts on a smaller scale are equally impactful in preserving wildlife and property. Students from CSU and Front Range Community College are working with the Colorado Department of Transportation and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to identify locations along U.S. 287 between Ted's Place and the Wyoming border to build safe wildlife crossings using existing underpasses and culverts. At least one-third of accidents on this 30-mile section of Hwy 287 involve animals. The students examined crash zone data, conducted site visits, and installed cameras to track wildlife movement to develop a list of locations and recommendations. The design of the safe wildlife crossing struc-

tures was created in earlier conservation projects with CSU Natural Resources Professor Rick Knight and students in his environmental conservation course working on private cattle ranches. One design uses vertical wooden posts installed in front of an underpass spaced 15-17 inches apart, which is too narrow for cattle, but wide enough for wildlife to pass between. The other features vertical posts supporting a horizontal log placed 40 inches above the ground. This acts as a barrier for cattle, but wildlife can easily jump over or go under the log. Cameras are installed at each safe crossing site and record the free movement of wild animals through their natural corridors. These passive structures are unique, simple, inexpensive and a wonderful example of creative problem solving for wildlife conservation. More than four structures have been completed with plans for additional installations as Colorado has received new funding for safety improvements on U.S.

287. Private landowners could become involved if they will allow construction of these safe crossing sites on their property. The students gain valuable experience, learning skills while having a direct impact on wildlife conservation.

Such innovative partnerships between government agencies, schools, landowners, and a willing student workforce demonstrates how much can be done to mitigate human and wildlife conflicts. It's a win-win story.



CSU and FRCC students build a wildlife crossing beneath the road.

Photo: CSU Warner College website.



Caring for your feeders and birds

It's that great time of year when the seasons get cold and birds have either migrated or are thriving on large caches of food. It is the time that we as birders and bird lovers provide bird seed to help supplement their winter stores and fuel their future migrations. This incredible pastime is one that allows us to interact personally and get to know the local birds of our areas, such as chickadees, nuthatches, and occasionally, doves. However, this pastime sometimes is not in the bird's best interest. Feeders are a common location for the spread of diseases between birds. Since the recent outbreak of avian influenza and other bacterial diseases, feeders are suspected as a major culprit in the spread of diseases between small songbirds of different species. Feeders are also locations where carnivorous birds and feral cats can take advantage of hunting opportunities. Carnivores often recognize feeders from a distance and will use them to hunt smaller birds. Feeders are locations where territorial aggression can occur as birds of same species compete for food resources.

It is important to clean feeders to keep birds healthy. To begin, for your standard seed or thistle seed feeder



Rufous Hummingbird
by Spencer Gilcrest, Audubon
Photography Awards.

you should clean it at least once a month or between filling the feeders. Begin by discarding any feed material that has been out for one month. You can store bird seed in a container if the seed has not been out-



European Starling and House Sparrows
by Bevi Chagnon,
Audubon Photography Awards.

side for more than one month. Use a soap and water container large enough to fully submerge the feeder, then scrub and clean the inside and outside. Once cleaned, place the feeder in a separate tub with nine parts water to one part bleach solution (in a 5-gallon

bucket, add 4.5 gallons of water and one-half gallon of bleach). Let the feeder sit in the solution for 10-15 minutes. If a feeder is large it may need to be spun or flipped to ensure all surfaces come into contact with bleach. The feeders should then be fully rinsed with warm or ambient temperature water. Once dry they can be refilled.

Suet containers should be cleaned the same way and at same time intervals. There are differences, however, between hummingbird and tube feeders. Hummingbird feeders should not be washed with detergents. Detergent residue has been shown to decrease hummingbird visits and has been correlated with gastrointestinal upset in some rehabilitation settings. Instead,

hummingbird feeders should be cleaned with warm tap water, gentle brushing, and vinegar to clean off sugar residue. From experience, near boiling water works well for cleaning. Once cleaned they should be rinsed for three to five minutes in hydrogen peroxide, after which they can be rinsed with normal tap water and used again. Hummingbird feeders should be emptied and changed every other day in the summer (greater than 60 degrees Fahrenheit) and twice weekly in winter (less than 60 Fahrenheit). For bird baths, just like a dog's water bowl, the water should be changed daily to help prevent disease and algae build up.

What about predators? Predation will happen at any feeder or bird bath. Similar to the watering holes of Africa, bird baths are easy locations for predators to monitor.

Feeders ideally should be within 10 feet of a tree or shrubbery to allow for quick escapes by small birds. If you own multiple feeders they should be spread around a yard and backyard; if you only have one, you should move its location once a month. This formula allows for variability. Ambush predators such as cats and owls do not adjust well to variability in their environment making it more difficult for predators to monitor.

Though this sounds like an immense task, you must remember that birds that are fed by us are our responsibility. It is important to treat their feeders with same respect we would treat our own dishes. And you can rest easy knowing you are helping keep birds healthy near your home and neighborhood.



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 www.facebook.com/FortCollinsAudubonSociety or look for emails sent 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 (all you need is a desire to share your love of birds and/or nature!), please email fcasfieldtrips@gmail.com.

Feb. 9, Sunday, 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 little more than four-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 7:30 a.m. in Bobcat Ridge parking lot.



Lapland Longspur by Michael Newlon, licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Feb. 16, Saturday, Raptor Alley Pawnee National Grasslands. Leader: Nolan Bunting, nbuntingt@rams.colostate.edu, 907-299-4625. A trip to one of the most amazing ecosystems on planet earth. The Pawnee during the winter is home to a large variety of birds including Lapland Longspurs, Rough-legged Hawks, and Northern Shrikes. The group

will meet in Nunn at 8 a.m. to carpool and the trip will likely run until 2-3 p.m. Please pack a lunch and be prepared for some driving and birding.

Either Feb. 22 or March 1, TBD, both Saturdays.

Sandhill Cranes. Leader: Lori Pivonka, lori.pivonka@gmail.com. Gather in north Fort Collins to carpool. We will try to find migrating Sandhill Cranes. The trip will involve driving along agricultural fields to spot the cranes and will take about two to three hours. Bring binoculars, a camera, and/or a scope if you have one; Lori will have a scope. Expect to learn about cranes and their behavior, and possibly get to watch their mating dance displays!



Sandhill Cranes by Spencer Hurt, licensed under CC BY 4.0.

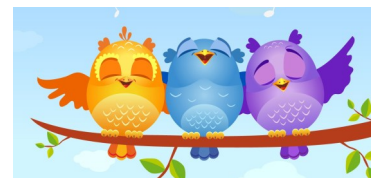
FCAS Welcomes New and Renewing Members

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Helen Betzen
Nick Betzen
Jim Branch
Kathleen Branch
Monica Brewer
Irene Briggs
Marcee Camenson
Aimee Chlebnik
Matthew Dane
Cynthia Decrescentis
Susan Degutz
Steven & Tanyo Dutro
Brandee Eide
Robert Ellis
Margaret Francia

Kathleen Ganzer
Suzanne Gauch
Paul Gordy
Andrew Goris
Kristin Gray
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Sue Kenney
Josephine Kerrigan
Loretta & Dean Klingenberg
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Melina Meier
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Frank Morgan
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Joyce Owens
Elizabeth Perna
Joseph Polazzi
Tim Priehs
Elizabeth Pruessner
Susan Puder

Rosemary Rader
Harry Rose
Barbara M. Sanders
John Shenot
Mary Jeanne McFerren Stobie
Jen Strating
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Amy Sugeno
Doug Swartz
Kimberly Vercimak
Sheila Webber
Robin Welsh
William West
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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.



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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: _____ |
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| <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.