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Northern Colorado Bird Alliance

(formerly 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.

March 2025

Volume 57, Issue 3

Northern Colorado Bird Alliance (formerly Fort Collins Audubon Society) Hosts

Alison Holloran, Executive Director of Audubon Rockies and

Dave Showalter, Conservation Photographer and Author

"Western Water and Our Public Lands: Where Have We Been and What May Be Next?"

Thursday, March 20

Note: Meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month rather than 2nd Thursday

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 online via Zoom. Enter the following at 7 p.m. to join the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89360304628>

Join us for an informative and thought-provoking presentation (with stunning photographs) on perhaps the most crucial issue for public lands in the western United States: water. We'll hear about how we got where we are and what the future might hold.

Alison Holloran is the Executive Director of Audubon Rockies, the regional office of National Audubon Society (NAS) for Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. She is also a Vice President of NAS.



Hoover Dam from Pixabay.com.

Dave Showalter is a Colorado-based conservation photographer who focuses on the American West and is author of three books. He is a Senior Fellow Photographer in the International League of Conservation Photographers, and works in partnership with numerous conservation groups, including Audubon Rockies, The Nature Conservancy, and Trout Unlimited.

Join us on March 20 for this free program that is open to the public.

Northern Colorado Bird Alliance 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.

President's Corner

by John Shenot

It's official: we are now the Northern Colorado Bird Alliance! At our February chapter meeting, members voted to amend our bylaws, the last step in changing the name of our organization.

I am so excited to start this new era! Over the coming months, the Board of Directors will work on gradually transitioning everything — website, bank account, social media accounts, etc. — to our new name. We also will launch our new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. We have a long to-do list.

You may see "Fort Collins Audubon Society" on some things for a while (e.g., previously printed brochures and handouts). The fact is, we are an all-volunteer organization. We simply don't have the capacity to completely "rebrand" ourselves overnight. Our goal is to complete the transition in about one year, hopefully less. We will keep members informed when important changes, such as the URL for our website, are implemented.

I want to thank our members for engaging in the process that led us to this point. Literally hundreds of you voted to drop "Fort Collins" and "Audubon" from our name, suggested possible new names for the chapter and criteria for weighing our options, voted to make Northern Colorado Bird Alliance our new name, and voted to approve the bylaws amendments that made the change official. I appreciate that you remained engaged and patient throughout this two-year process.

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www.fortcollinsaudubon.org

Visit us on Facebook:

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

I also want to thank the Name Change Committee that led our efforts to find a new name: Kit Gray (chair), Kate Burgess, Bill Cushman, Alan Godwin,

Sabrina Jones, Barb Patterson, and Judd Patterson. The good judgment and creativity of these individuals, along with the many hours of volunteer time they contributed, led us to this successful outcome.

And I want to thank the four anonymous members of our Name Change Committee's Advisory Group. These individuals, who were not members of our chapter, provided feedback and invaluable advice to the committee on how a name change could and should fit into broader efforts to make the chapter more welcoming and inclusive to the entire population of the communities we serve, especially people who don't know who we are, or what we do, or who question whether they would fit in with us. This group emphasized that changing our name should be just one step in broadening our chapter's appeal to the entire community — and the Board received this message loud and clear.

Finally, I want to assure members that our chapter's excellent relationship with National Audubon Society will continue unaltered. In fact, we have followed in the footsteps of 35 other local chapters of the National Audubon Society that have similarly adopted "Bird Alliance" as a core part of their chapter name.

In summary, we have a new name, but the same mission we've always had: to promote the appreciation, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, through education, participation, stewardship, and advocacy. So, let's get back to work on that!

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



Recent Policy Shifts and Bird Conservation: What You Can Do

Recent changes in federal policies have raised concerns among conservationists about the future of bird habitats and wildlife protection in the United States. As stewards of our natural heritage, it's more important than ever to understand these developments and their potential impacts on avian populations, regardless of our political affiliations.

Several key policy shifts could affect bird conservation efforts. These include, among many others, a new review of national monument boundaries, expedited energy development on public lands, modifications to Endangered Species Act implementation that would allow oil and gas drilling in protected areas, withdrawal from international climate agreements, and pauses on many wind energy projects. While some argue these changes promote economic growth, others worry about expected negative impacts and disregard for wildlife.

Unchecked, these policy adjustments will lead to habitat fragmentation, disruption of migration patterns, and increased pressure on already threatened species. Long-term climate change effects could further exacerbate these challenges, potentially altering ecosystems that birds rely on for breeding, feeding, and shelter.

Despite these concerns, there are many ways individuals can contribute to bird conservation. Advocacy is a powerful tool — consider contacting your local, state, and national representatives to express your views on habitat protection. “5 calls,” an app on Android and iOS, is available to help find your representatives and their contact information, and provides scripts to those interested that are tailored to specific concerns. It is also helpful to participate in public comment periods for land management decisions, ensuring your voice is heard. Supporting conservation

organizations can also amplify efforts to protect birds and their habitats.

Direct action is equally important. Volunteer for habitat restoration projects in your community. Participate in citizen science initiatives like the Backyard Bird Count, iNaturalist, or eBird, which provide valuable data for researchers and policymakers. Create bird-friendly spaces in your own backyard by planting native species and reducing pesticide use. Support local conservation initiatives through donations or volunteer work.

Remember, the power to make a difference lies with each of us. Stay informed about conservation issues, engage with your community, and take action to protect our diverse and unique plant and animal communities, and the

habitats they rely on. Every effort, no matter how small, contributes to the larger goal of preserving biodiversity for future generations.

The following links describe potential threats to ecosystems, birds, and wildlife:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/trump-administration-consider-redrawing-boundaries-national-monuments-rcna190740>.

<https://www.npca.org/articles/6614-five-ways-president-trump-s-executive-orders-could-harm-national-parks>.

<https://earth.org/trump-2-0-actions-we-are-likely-to-see-against-climate-nature-and-wildlife/>.

<https://www.skyhineWS.com/news/trump-national-monuments-public-land-orders-colorado-camp-hale/>.



Sunset on the Pawnee National Grasslands
by Joseph Webber.



Greater Sage-Grouse from Audubon California.

Lights Out

Every year in North America, more than 3.5 billion birds move north in the spring and four billion birds fly south in the fall. More than 80 percent of them travel at night, navigating with the night sky. However, as they pass over towns and cities on their way, many become disoriented by bright artificial lights and skylight.

While lights can cause birds to collide with buildings and windows, bird fatalities are more directly caused by the amount of energy the birds waste flying around in confusion. The exhaustion can then leave them vulnerable to other urban threats and deplete their energy reserves needed for surviving migration and producing chicks in subsequent breeding seasons.

Light pollution affects dozens of species, including those we have identified as most in need of and most likely to benefit from our help, such as the Burrowing Owl, Yellow-bellied Cuckoo, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Just one building can cause major problems for birds. For example, within one week in 2017, nearly 400 songbirds were caught in the floodlights of a 32-story Texas skyscraper and killed via window collisions.

Audubon's Lights Out program is a national effort to reduce this problem. The strategy is simple: by convincing building owners and managers to turn off excess lighting during the months migrating birds are flying overhead, we help provide them safe passage between their nesting and wintering grounds.

To contribute to the Lights Out solution: 1) Turn off exterior decorative lighting; 2) reduce atrium lighting whenever possible; 3) turn off interior lighting, especially on higher stories; 4) switch to task and area lighting for workers staying late or cover the windows; 5) use shielding and aiming so that no light is emitted upward; 6) install automatic motion sensors and controls whenever possible; and 7) when converting to new lighting, assess the quality and quantity of light needed and avoid over-lighting with newer, brighter technology.

Turning off bright lights across the Front Range helps birds move on within minutes, as discovered by

the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and New York City Audubon during the annual 9/11 memorial in New York City. Hundreds of birds are caught in the memorial's beams every year, but turning them off for just 20 to 30 minutes at a time greatly reduces the density of birds in the area.

Taking more steps to decrease the amount of light our buildings emit minimizes unnecessary bird deaths, prioritizes human safety, saves money by reducing energy consumption, and supports your or your organization's sustainability goals. To learn more about local efforts, visit <https://lights-out-colorado.darkskycolorado.org/>.



Denver lit up by Bill Dickinson.

Northern Colorado Bird Alliance Welcomes New and Renewing Members

Eileen Baker
Denise & Mark Bretting
Wayne Crayton
Jessica Davis
Dirk & Jeanne Draper
Kate Dwire
Nancy Eckardt
Richard Ferguson
Raymond & Joan Glabach
Jesse Gray
Maggie Harrington
Melanie Hartman
Kitawna Hoover
Dorothy Hudson

Nancy B. Jones
Charles Knopp
David M. Landers
Janet Larsen
Robin Long
Sandra Pitcaithley &
Thomas Lynch
Ted Manahan
Judith Christy & Robert Mann
Jessie Meschievitz
Larry Moskowitz
Patrick Nyquist
Philip Ogle
Susan Peterson

Phil Phelan
Adam Ploegman
Margret Reek
Katherine Reid
Ingrid Rosoff
Amy Roush
Linda Sachs
Max & Yvonne Salfinger
Doug Schlam
Thomas D. Schultz
Shelley Steinbock
Vickie Traxler
Peter Weckesser



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 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.

March 1, Saturday, Sandhill Cranes. Leader: Lori Pivonka, lori.pivonka@gmail.com. Gather at 7:30 a.m. at

Jax Farm & Ranch in northern Fort Collins and carpool north to agricultural fields, where we will look for migrating sandhill cranes. The trip will involve driving along agricultural fields to spot the cranes and will take about 2-3 hours due to travel time. Bring binoculars, a camera, and/or a scope if you have one. Lori will also have a scope. Expect to learn about cranes and their behavior and possibly watch their mating dance displays!

The signup link for the

Sandhill Crane trip has already been released and may

be full by the time this newsletter is published. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CADAEC1FEC70-54945798-saturday>.

March 8, Saturday, Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area. Leader: Sirena Brownlee sirena.brownlee@hdrinc.com. Join Sirena for a walk along the Cattail Flats trail for waterfowl and Bald Eagle viewing. Plan for a 2-mile walk on trails. All levels are welcome, and a spotting scope will be available. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot.

March 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 4-mile hike covers moderate to flat ter-

rain 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.

March 15, Saturday, Lee Martinez, LGBTQIA+ Community and Allies.

Leader: Kit Gray, kit@kitgrayillustration.com.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot located at 600 N. Sherwood Street. We will meet at the north end where a paved walking trail meets the parking lot and basketball courts are visible. The majority of this outing is on a flat, paved trail. If you have accessibility questions or need more information, please contact Kit.

Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CADAEC1FEC70-54791849-lgbtqia>.

March 22, Saturday, Riverbend Ponds Natural Area. Leader: Daniel Carrier, dacarrier7@gmail.com or

571-420-7375. Meet at the Riverbend Ponds Natural Area main parking lot at 8 a.m. to check out the many ponds and marshes within this amazing natural area's boundaries. We'll keep an eye out for Virginia Rail, Northern Shrike, Northern Harrier, unique waterfowl, a variety of sparrows, and many others. This outing will involve a couple of miles of slow walking on flat, well-maintained paths around the park.

Tentative: March 23, Sunday, Watson Lake.

Leader: Ryan Twedt, 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 and swallows. The trail is very flat and mostly paved, though we might go off the paved path if we see something good. Additional details will be provided with the signup link announcement.



Sandhill Cranes by Ron Harden.

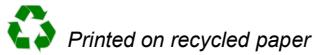


Cassin's Finch by Evan Lopez.



Black-billed Magpie by Evan Lopez.

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



Membership Application

Join Northern Colorado Bird Alliance (the chapter), National Audubon Society (NAS), or both.

<input type="checkbox"/> New or renewing chapter member \$ 20	Name: _____
Receive the <i>Ptarmigan</i> by email	
<input type="checkbox"/> New or renewing chapter member \$ 30	Address: _____
Receive the <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime chapter member \$750	City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Receive <i>Ptarmigan</i> by mail or email	
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional support for chapter programs \$ ____	Phone: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional support for Alex Cringan Fund \$ ____	Email: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> New NAS member \$ 20	May we send you chapter email alerts if updates occur for field trips, programs, etc.? Yes or No
Receive the <i>NAS Audubon</i> by mail	
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewing NAS member \$ 35	May we contact you for volunteer activities such as helping at events or contacting legislators on important issues? Yes or No
Receive the <i>NAS Audubon</i> by mail	

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.