

ANNUAL REPORT

COLORADO FIELD
ORNITHOLOGISTS
2021



COBIRDS.ORG



CFO Board Members

At the start of the year (January 1, 2021), the CFO Board of Directors was comprised as follows:

President

Nick Komar

Vice President

Gloria Nikolai (Membership Chair)

Treasurer

Irene Fortune

Secretary

Diana Beatty

Colorado Birds Record Committee Chair

Mark Peterson

Colorado Birds Managing Editor

Peter Burke (Communications Committee Chair)

Director

Sue Riffe (Field Trips Committee Chair)

Director

Stephanie Gobert-Pitt (Grants and Scholarships Committee Chair)

Director

Megan Jones Patterson (Volunteer Chair)

Director

Alison Hilf

Non-voting Board Members

Youth Ambassador

Joe Kipper

WFO Liaison

Don Marsh

Board personnel changes during 2021

1. In March, Gloria Nikolai retired from the board. Megan Jones Patterson assumed the roles of interim VP and Membership Chair.
2. In March, Rachel Hopper became the Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC) Chair.
3. In March, Alison Hilf resigned from the board.
4. In April, Rachel Hopper resigned and Mark Peterson resumed the role of CBRC Chair.
5. In May, Greg Osland (Colorado Birding Challenge Committee Chair), Forrest Luke (Conventions Committee Chair), and Bryan Guarente joined the board as Directors.
6. In May, Peter Burke resigned as Communications Committee Chair.
7. In July, Stephanie Gobert-Pitt was elected Vice President.
8. In July, David Tønnessen replaced Joe Kipper as Youth Ambassador.
9. In July, Greg Osland became Communications Committee Chair.
10. In September, Chuck Hundertmark (Conservation Committee Chair) joined the board.
11. In December, Greg Osland resigned as Chair of the Colorado Birding Challenge and Communications Committees. Nick Komar took over as interim Colorado Birding Challenge Chair.



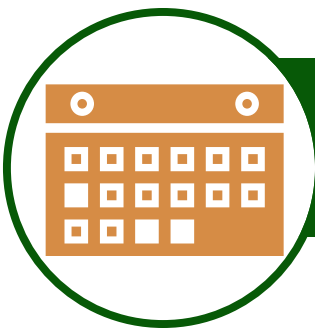
2021 President's Report

In 2021, CFO made a number of structural changes. CFO conducted an online survey of members and non-members in the birding community about values they hold to help inform Board decisions on the organization's future direction. CFO hired Will Murray to facilitate a Strategic Planning exercise with the Board of Directors in August to guide the development of future direction for the organization. To update and improve CFO's membership and event registration systems, the board voted to transition to a new web platform. CFO contracted Neon One to provide a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system and a new Wordpress website beginning September 1 for a website to roll out in 2022. CFO hired Kerri Schlachter as a half-time Project Manager on October 1, with a 1-year contract to implement the CRM and website transition and provide event coordination.

In 2021, CFO expanded its educational opportunities for members and the Colorado birding community. CFO increased its investment in the publication of its quarterly journal, *Colorado Birds*. CFO arranged to cross-promote announcements with Denver Field Ornithologists during events. CFO provided a liaison (Diana Beatty) to consult with Colorado Parks and Wildlife on the Colorado Birding Trail. CFO added new videos to its YouTube channel. The channel had over 250 subscribers and 4,300 video views by year end. COBirds listserv (via Google Groups) and the CFO Facebook page remain popular among members and non-members, reaching 2,000 and 5,700 subscribers respectively. In 2021, one Lifetime Achievement Award and four Homeowner's Awards were awarded to community members (see Table 1 for details).

Table 1. CFO 2021 Award Recipients

Name	Award	Nominator	Bird hosted
Joe Roller	Lifetime Achievement	CFO Board	NA
George Steele	Homeowner (San Miguel County)	CFO Board	Ruddy Ground-Dove
August Konvalin	Homeowner (Arapahoe County)	CFO Board	Summer Tanager
Gabe Rokich	Homeowner (Huerfano County)	CFO Board	Yellow Grosbeak
Darsie Tiglas	Homeowner (Larimer County)	CFO Board	Canyon Towhee



CFO Events 2021

CFO inaugurated several new initiatives in 2021 to support the conservation, research, and enjoyment of Colorado's birds. To support conservation in Colorado, CFO started an annual big day fundraiser, the Colorado Birding Challenge. CFO partnered with Scott Somershoe to create the Joe Roller Memorial Grant to provide research grants in perpetuity. CFO continued the CFO Speaker Series started in 2020, started a Birding Skills Workshop Series, and a Field Workshop Series to provide opportunities for members and the Colorado birding community to improve their skills and enjoy birds throughout the state.

1. **First Annual Colorado Birding Challenge** on May 8, 2021. Seventy-four teams registered, with 174 observers. Raised \$35,000 for Bird Conservancy of the Rockies to conduct grassland bird research and habitat restoration.
2. **Scott Somershoe's Green Big Year** generated \$17,000 in donations for Joe Roller Memorial Grant fund during 2021 (total funds generated from Dec 2020 to Feb 2022 is over \$40,000).
3. **The CFO Speaker Series** hosted Arvind Panjabi in March, Richard Crossley in June, Holly Merker in September and Kyle Horton in December. These were free online events and most continue to be available for viewing on YouTube.
4. **Birding Skills Workshops** were presented online in January, February, March, April, May, August and September (see Table 2 for details). These were free online events and all are available for viewing on YouTube. The September workshop also had a field trip component at a cost of \$50 per person.
5. **The CFO Field Workshop Series** was inaugurated as dispersed field workshops across the state with a different focus each year. The focus in 2021 was shorebird identification with an online training webinar and 25 field trips in August and September. Field trip fees were \$10 per person.
6. **Annual Convention** – postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 2. Birding Skills Workshops. Viewership ranged between 50 and 150 computer accounts per workshop, with additional views on YouTube.

Title	Presenter	Date
Winter Raptor Identification	Eric Hynes	January 31
Gull Identification	Nick Komar	February 28
EBird for Everyone	Ted Floyd	March 28
Using Audio for Bird ID	Nathan Pieplow	April 25
Flycatcher Identification	David Tønnessen	May 30
Shorebird Identification	Eric Hynes	August 7
Sparrow Identification	Andy Bankert	September 19



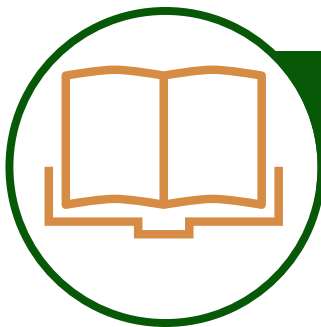
Membership

CFO's membership grew 20% in 2021, exceeding our goal of 15% annual membership growth. The membership is divided between digital (415) and print memberships (303). At the end of 2021, CFO had the largest student/youth membership on record (since 2014) with 22 individuals. By the end of the year, 65% of members had renewed for 2022 (including members who had already paid for multiple years). Data is not available to compare this to previous years but by the end of January 2021 CFO's membership was 82% of what it had been on December 31, 2020. Membership fees were increased to account for increased prices of services, along with increases to operating costs to support the growing membership and journal expenditures.



Colorado Birds Records Committee

The Colorado Birds Records Committee, chaired by Mark Peterson, published its 79th Report in the fall issue of *Colorado Birds* (Vol 55.4). The report detailed the acceptance of 64 records and not accepting 14 records. Three new species were added to the official state list: Variable Hawk, Ruddy Ground-Dove, and Yellow Grosbeak. To total state list is now 517 species.



Colorado Birds Journal

In 2020, Peter Burke transitioned from his role as CFO Secretary to succeed Christy Payne as editor of *Colorado Birds*. Beginning in 2021, he ushered in a series of changes to retain key authors, expand the journal's production team and add innovative new content. After recruiting science editor Luke George, photo editor George Mayfield and assistant editor Georgia Doyle, Peter received board approval to pay regular feature authors a stipend of \$150 per article. When long-time author Tony Leukering announced his retirement, Peter launched a reimagined field identification series titled Field Marks, recruiting David Tønnessen as its first author. Peter also recruited Eric DeFonso to write a new regular feature, Birding By Ear; re-enlisted the help of Robert Righter, who contributes articles on historical ornithologists and launched a new interview series titled Five Questions. In addition, working with a graphic designer, he led a comprehensive redesign of the journal, upgrading to full color, improving the quality of photography and implementing numerous other design elements. *Colorado Birds* is widely renowned as one the best state-based bird publications in the country.



Grants & Scholarships

CFO's Grants and Scholarships supported five ornithologists conducting research on Colorado birds for a total of \$5,300. A new fund was created in December 2020 to honor the late, long-time, avid Colorado birder Joe Roller to help support the research awards. Donations to this fund were solicited through Scott Somershoe's Green Big Year. These funds will be distributed annually to the top research proposal received every year. In 2021, the recipient of the Joe Roller Memorial Grant, Carolyn Gunn, led a project in the Box Canyon of Ouray, Colorado, using a nest camera to document behavior of nesting Black Swifts. Other projects supported through generous donations to the program included understanding the dynamics of predation and forage availability on survival of Mountain Plovers, investigating the effects of avian malaria infections on nestling survival of Black-capped and Mountain Chickadees, studying the effects of urbanization on chickadee nestling development, and exploring the genetics of House Wrens along the Front Range. CFO's grants committee was ably led by Stephanie Gobert-Pitt. No youth scholarships were awarded in 2021.



Conservation

Under the leadership of Chuck Hundertmark, the CFO Conservation Committee developed a 2-year work plan that was adopted by the CFO board by unanimous vote in November 2021. The committee selected Gunnison Sage-Grouse habitat restoration for fundraising efforts in 2022, principally through the second annual Colorado Birding Challenge scheduled for May 7, 2022. The plan also includes that the committee will investigate the feasibility of establishing a land acquisition/protection fund. The committee intends to establish CFO's role in the state's conservation community as an expert source of observations of conservation value and a promoter of conservation ethics among a growing birding community.



Treasurer's Report

CFO expanded the types and number of events it offered in 2021 as described throughout this report, as well as investing in the quality and continuation of *Colorado Birds*. Due to ongoing state and local health guidelines during the pandemic, CFO had to cancel the annual convention and forego the associated revenue from this event. CFO also invested in significant upgrades to the website and is supporting functions to enable expanding program variety and reach in future years.

Table 3. 2021 CFO Financial Report

Total Assets, beginning of 2021:		\$68,061	
Total Assets, end of 2021:		\$45,859	
Income to Roller Memorial Fund - maintained separately from Operating Funds: \$16,768			
Revenue:		Expenses:	
Programs:	\$37,484	Programs:	\$58,604
Memberships:	\$19,222	Grants:	\$6,079
Donations:	\$7,346	Administrative:	\$8,502
Other:	\$14	Website/Upgrades:	\$13,083
Total Revenue:	\$64,066	Total Expenses:	\$86,268



2022 Outlook

The principal challenge of 2022 will be launching the new website in order to proceed smoothly with registration for two major events in May: the second annual Colorado Birding Challenge and the annual CFO convention.

CFO plans to continue the quarterly Speaker Series, regular Birding Skills Workshops, and the Field Workshop Series that were successful in 2021.

The next challenge is to generate enough income to continue and expand professional support for the increased amount of CFO events and activities. Pricing for 2022 events and membership dues reflect this reality.