

# ANNUAL REPORT

COLORADO FIELD  
ORNITHOLOGISTS  
2022



[COBIRDS.ORG](http://COBIRDS.ORG)



## CFO Board Members

*The Colorado Field Ornithologists Board of Directors as of December 2022.*

### President

Nick Komar

### Vice President

Chuck Hundertmark

### Treasurer

Sondra Bland

### Secretary

Kyle Carlsen

### Colorado Birds Record Committee Chair

Peter Gent

### Colorado Birds Managing Editor

Peter Burke

### Director

Megan Jones Patterson (Membership & Volunteer Chair)

### Director

Sue Riffe (Field Trips Committee Chair)

### Director

Linda Lee (Communications Chair)

### Director

Doug Faulkner (Conventions Chair)

### Director

Philip McNichols (Conservation Chair)

### Director

Bryan Guarente

### Director

Chip Clouse

### Non-Voting Board Members

#### Youth Ambassador

David Tønnessen

#### WFO Liaison

Don Marsh



#### Board personnel changes during 2022

Officers/Directors whose terms ended at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

- Diana Beatty
- Irene Fortune
- Stephanie Gobert-Pitt
- Mark Peterson

New Officers/Directors who were voted in at the 2022 Annual Meeting (having joined the board since the last annual meeting or new to the board).

- Chuck Hundertmark (Conservation chair Sept 2021, Vice President May 2022)
- Peter Gent (Colorado Bird Records chair, January 2022)
- Sondra Bland (Treasurer, January 2022)
- Linda Lee (Communications chair, March 2022)
- Chip Clouse (Director, Conventions Committee chair, March 2022)

New Officers/Directors who have been approved by the board since the 2022 Annual Meeting.

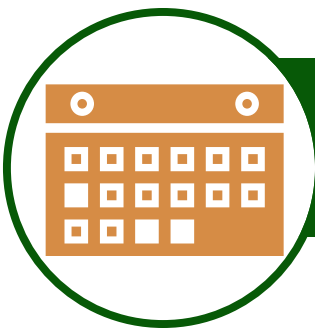
- Kyle Carlsen (Secretary, June 2022)
- Doug Falkner (Director, Conventions Committee chair, September 2022)
- Philip McNichols (Director, Conservation Committee chair, January 2023)



## 2022 President's Report

During 2022, CFO returned to normal activities such as the annual convention that had been curtailed due to the recent pandemic of 2020-2021. The convention was held in Pueblo as originally planned for 2020 and was well attended. Other novel activities begun in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic were continued in 2022 such as bird identification field workshops and zoom-based speaker series. The second annual Colorado Birding Challenge was held on May 9. This event raised close to \$40,000 for Gunnison Sage-grouse conservation and helped support CFO's increasing operating costs. Some significant changes in the composition of the Board of Directors reflected CFO's increasing growth in membership and scope of activities. Treasurer Irene Fortune ended her two year term and was replaced by Sondra Bland. Secretary Diana Beaty ended her two year term and was replaced by Kyle Carlsen. Stephanie Pitt stepped down as Vice-President and was replaced by Chuck Hundertmark. Mark Petersen stepped down as Chair of the Colorado Bird Records Committee and was replaced by former CFO President Peter Gent. Chip Clouse joined the Board, replacing Greg Osland who resigned. Director awards for distinguished service were given to Mark Peterson, Megan Jones-Patterson, Ann Johnson and Mark Yeager while Van Truan received the Lifetime Achievement award.





## CFO Events

CFO continued several initiatives to support the conservation, research, and enjoyment of Colorado's birds. To support conservation in Colorado, the second annual Colorado Birding Challenge took place. CFO continued the CFO Speaker Series started in 2020, and a Field Workshop Series that was focused on hummingbirds in 2022.

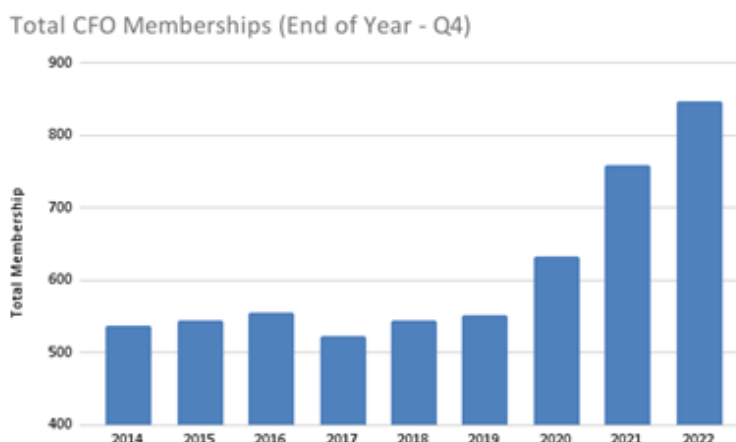
1. **Colorado Birding Challenge** On May 7, 2022, 101 birders in 45 teams took to the field in several dozen Colorado counties to raise funds as part of CFO's second Colorado Birding Challenge (CoBC.) Participants raised nearly \$40,000, which primarily went to the Gunnison Basin Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance (GB-SEA) to restore critical habitat for the threatened Gunnison Sage-Grouse and other sagebrush-obligate species.
2. **Year of the Pinyon Jay** We kicked off the 2023 Year of the Pinyon Jay by partnering with the Great Basin Bird Observatory in December of 2022 on trainings which covered the basics of Pinyon Jay biology and the history of Great Basin Bird Observatory's Community Science Initiative.
3. **CFO Speaker Series** included Zooniverse and Bald Eagles on the Front Range,. These were free online events and most continue to be available for viewing on YouTube.
4. **CFO Field Workshop Series** Inaugurated in 2021 as dispersed field workshops across the state with a different focus each year. The focus in 2022 was hummingbird identification. Nine field trips were scheduled, and were well attended.
5. **Annual Convention** Our first convention since 2019 took place in 2022 in Pueblo. Temperatures were not what we expected when we planned this convention, with many field trips encountering rain or snow. And yet, our hardy attendees persevered, and were rewarded with several rare and uncommon migrants. In all, 246 species of birds were observed.
6. **Newsletter** We began an online newsletter sent every other month. This newsletter includes activities, birding news around our state, as well as how our supporters are making a difference for birds.





## Membership by Megan Jones Patterson

CFO memberships continue to grow and diversify. By the end of 2022, CFO had 847 individual members, an annual growth of 11.6%. CFO also had its largest student/youth member cohort on record (since 2014) with 23 individuals.



Members are divided on how they prefer to receive Colorado Birds, the flagship CFO publication, with 485 digital memberships and 325 print memberships. In August 2022, the CFO Board voted to change the membership system from a calendar year (1 Jan - 31 Dec) to an annual (365-days) system.



## Field Trips by Sue Riffe

We enjoyed our second annual Field Workshop Series in July and early August. Hummingbird field identification was the focus. We had workshops from Grand Junction and up and down the Front Range. All four species made an appearance with the objective on juvenile and female identification. Several banding workshops also thrilled our members.

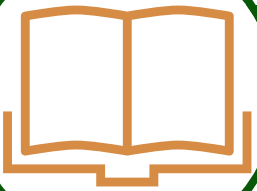
The Pueblo Convention field trips were a big success. With heavy rains, many of the trips on dirt roads needed to be rearranged the morning of. Thanks to all who participated and adjusted trip locations accordingly. Our members and field trip leaders are truly wonderful!





## CBRC by Peter Gent

In early 2022, Peter Gent took over as Chairman of the Colorado Bird Records Committee from Mark Peterson, who had served with distinction for several years. The CBRC published the 80th, 81st and 82nd Reports in the Spring, Summer and Fall issues respectively of *Colorado Birds*, Volume 56, 2022. These reports documented the addition of Variable Hawk, Rufous-backed Robin, Cassia Crossbill, Yellow Grosbeak and Chihuahuan Meadowlark to the Colorado State List, which now stands at 519 species. In addition, an article on the four 2nd state records and two 4th state records documented in 2022 was published in the Winter 2022 issue of *Colorado Birds*. The CBRC has now caught up with the backlog of records, so that only records submitted in 2022 are left for evaluation by the committee in early 2023.



## Colorado Birds Journal by Peter Burke

*Colorado Birds* is among the top regional birding publications in the country featuring exceptional articles from longtime contributor David Leatherman, a retired entomologist and author of *The Hungry Bird*. Two recent additions to the journal's feature article team include David Tonnessen, author of *Field Marks*, and Eric DeFonso, who writes *Birding By Ear*. All three of these regular features dive deeply into topics related to advanced field ornithology and provide a wonderful resource to Colorado's very active birding community. The journal also features scientific articles, updates from CFO committees, fun historical essays and a compelling interview titled *Five Questions*.

It takes a team to bring all this content together. George Mayfield is the journal's Photo Editor. In addition to sourcing high quality images from local photographers, George also works with Colorado poet Frank Coons, pairing an original poem with an artful photograph featured on the back cover of the journal. Luke George is a CSU professor with more than 30 years of avian ecology and conservation experience and serves as science editor for *Colorado Birds*. Georgia Doyle is the journal's unofficial assistant editor, working behind the scenes to ensure each issue conforms to style guidelines, proofreading and offering insights into both content and layout. Lee Grunau recently took over as graphic designer, taking our challenging 6x9 layout to the next level.



## Conservation by Chuck Hundertmark

During the first half of the year, the Conservation Committee coordinated with the Great Basin Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance to promote the Gunnison Sage-Grouse habitat restoration project that was selected to receive funds from the 2022 Colorado Birding Challenge. In July, CFO president presented a check for \$39,578.55 to the sagebrush restoration coalition representing donations raised by CFO members and volunteers during the May challenge. New committee member Philip McNichols began representing CFO on Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Wildlife and Habitat Roundtable, a forum for exchange of ideas between CPW and representatives of community organizations. The committee chair represented CFO at meetings of the Audubon Colorado Council to seek areas of collaboration. As a result of that collaboration, CFO co-sponsored the 2022 Getting Green Laws webinars conducted by Audubon Rockies. The webinars provide information on bills before the Colorado Legislature that will impact bird populations. Also, CFO is now represented and attending the Audubon Council (ACC), a statewide meeting of Colorado Audubon chapters.

Committee member Scott Somershoe connected the committee with the Great Basin Bird Observatory to create a portal for Colorado birders to join the observatory's community science project documenting habitat use by Pinyon Jays. These charismatic jays have undergone critical population declines over several decades. Through connection with the observatory a link to the GBBO project was established on the CFO website. Participation allows CFO members and others to contribute to an understanding of how these jays use their pinyon-juniper woodland habitat. That information will be essential for development of informed management plans to support species conservation. The project was introduced to members in December. During the last quarter, the committee solicited applications for project to receive funding from 2023 Colorado Birding Challenge donations. The selected project will add additional support for understanding Pinyon Jay breeding colony distribution to directly inform woodland management plans of the Bureau of Land Management, the custodian for much of the habitat of this species in Colorado.



# Treasurer's Report by Sonda Bland

CFO experienced remarkable growth in 2022. Our first convention since 2019 took place in Pueblo and despite unseasonable weather was a great success. We donated \$39,579 from funds raised in the second annual Colorado Birding Challenge (COBC) to the Gunnison Basin-Sagebrush Ecosystem Alliance for Gunnison Sage-Grouse habitat restoration. With the goal of maintaining the Joe Roller Memorial (JRM) Fund in perpetuity, the Fund was placed in a Charles Schwab account under the management of Obermeyer Woods Investment Counsel LLP who are generously managing it with no fees. Our websites, upgraded in 2021, are continually improving and are maintained and further developed by a skilled subcontractor. Our members stepped up and donated at unprecedented levels. We look forward to another successful year in 2023!

Assets at beginning of year: \$69,728

Assets at end of year: \$81,481

Revenue:

- Convention: \$34,771
- Donations: \$18,003
- Memberships: \$29,270
- COBC: \$46,973
- Other Revenue: \$1,699
- JRM Fund donations: \$26,879

Expenses:

- Convention: \$29,102
- Grants: \$8,548
- Administrative: \$4,970
- COBC: \$40,568
- Other Programs: \$20,407
- Websites: \$40,724

Total revenue: \$157,595

Total expenses: \$144,319





## 2023 Outlook by Chuck Hundertmark

With the support of members and donors along with the financial management skills of Treasurer Sondra Bland, CFO enters 2023 in sound financial condition, laying a foundation to provide exciting opportunities for our members.

The CFO Communication Committee, under chair Linda Lee built a dynamic communication program in 2022 with regular communication to members and the birding community. The program included the launch of the CFO newsletter which will mature in the year ahead.

In 2023 we will build on the launch of our new relationship management platform by partnering with Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) for what could be our biggest ever convention. Based at Copper Mountain Resort in Summit County the convention will offer field trips for mountain birding ranging from mountain parks and pinyon-juniper woodland to high elevation lakes and alpine tundra. The convention will also feature birding skills workshops and an expanded ornithological paper session.

Awareness of the alarming decline of Pinyon Jay population in 2022 led to a two-pronged effort at the end of the year to support conservation of this colony-nesting pinyon-juniper woodland specialist. Much of the habitat for these birds is under management of federal and state agencies. Because little is known about how Pinyon Jays use pinyon-juniper woodland, monitoring the species is critical to planning for their conservation. Under leadership of Philip McNichols, the CFO Conservation Committee entered a partnership with Great Basin Bird Observatory for a community science project to monitor habitat use by these jays. By participating in the project, CFOs members and other birders will be able to provide data that are essential to the establishment of woodland management plans supportive of Pinyon Jay survival.

The Conservation Committee also identified a team of biologists working on conservation of these jays to be the recipient of 2023 donations for the third Colorado Birding Challenge. When a petition was filed in 2022 to list the Pinyon Jay under the Endangered Species Act it raised awareness in the nick of time for the jays. The recent federal infrastructure bill pressured federal agencies to plan fuel reduction in lands they manage. In Colorado, much of the pinyon-juniper woodland is managed by the Bureau of Land Management. That agency is developing management plans to comply. Through the Colorado Birding Challenge, in 2023 CFO members will be able to support the work of Amanda Cheeseman and Emily Macklin identifying Pinyon Jay colonies in time to include protection of those colonies in fuel reduction planning.

Under Chair Peter Gent, the Colorado Bird Records Committee (CBRC) significantly reduced the backlog of records to review. In 2023, the committee will likely eliminate the backlog. The CRBC shepherds the list of bird species confirmed to have occurred in the state and each of its counties. In 2023, the committee will accelerate progress in making the records documenting rarities available for searching on the web site.

Thanks to a supportive membership, dedicated volunteers, and a dynamic board, CFO can look forward to another year of active engagement with the Colorado birding community.