

Audubon Society seeks special designation for Poudre

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Local birding enthusiasts hope to bring a mark of distinction to the Poudre River.

Members of the Fort Collins Audubon Society have nominated the stretch of the river from Bellvue to Interstate 25 for recognition as an "important bird area," or IBA, by the organization's state chapter.

The designation would recognize the significance of the river corridor as habitat for many species of birds, said Philip Cafaro, a Colorado State University professor and co-author of the nomination document.

It also may encourage conservation efforts along the 20-mile corridor that would preserve the habitat and opportunities for bird watching, he said.

"We all love the river and know it as a place to go for recreation," he said. "This would show it's a dynamic place to see birds."

Naming the river segment the Cache la Poudre Urban River Important Bird Area would carry no regulatory weight, Cafaro said. But Audubon members would work with willing owners of public and private land along the corridor to encourage habitat preservation and bird watching.

Colorado has 54 designated important bird areas, including Fossil Creek Reservoir and the Pawnee National Grasslands. A technical committee made up of scientists will review the Poudre nomination to determine whether the area meets criteria for designation as an IBA, Cafaro said.