



# SacajaweaAudubonNews

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON BUILDS ON AN INTEREST IN BIRDS TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ENJOYMENT, EDUCATION AND ACTION.

November 2011

## Calendar at a Glance

- Nov 4th Comments due on Arctic Wilderness
- Nov 9th Bird Sightings to John Parker
- Nov 14th SAS September Meeting

## Volunteer to do publicity, get published

Sacajawea Audubon Society is looking for a volunteer to coordinate publicity. The requirement is to write and distribute press releases about our monthly meetings and our field trips. The opportunities beyond that are open: publicize other birding activities, write magazine articles, appear on talk radio, etc., depending upon the interests and time of the volunteer. If you might be interested, please contact Anne Millbrooke, 406-599-1096 or [anne27m@yahoo.com](mailto:anne27m@yahoo.com).



## Adopt-a-Lek and Help the Greater Sage Grouse

**Monday November 14th at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Hope Lutheran Church**  
**2152 W. Graf Street (off of South 19th) in Bozeman**

Ben Deeble, formerly with the National Wildlife Federation, will discuss the current status of Greater Sage Grouse, an iconic species of the West's sagebrush landscapes, and efforts to conserve the species. Established by the National Wildlife Federation as a citizen science program, Adopt-a-Lek has been training volunteers to survey sage-grouse breeding leks and habitat across eleven western states. The program came to Montana in 2000. In 2012 Montana Audubon will assume administration of the program in this state. Volunteers are needed in central and southwest Montana to gather data for use by scientists in determining the distribution of the Greater Sage Grouse, changes in sage-grouse populations, and the effectiveness of conservation efforts.

Ben Deeble, formerly, the Sage Steppe Coordinator for the Northern Rockies & Prairies Regional Center of the National Wildlife Federation, he was based at the NRPRC office in Missoula for over a decade. Now under contract with Montana Audubon, Ben is continuing the Adopt-a-Lek project. He has a Master of Science degree. His specialty is shrub-steppe birds and habitats. Previously, he worked for the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department, the Idaho Fish and Game Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

## President's Comments: Urban Birds

The Bridger Raptor Festival in October was great fun and great publicity for the raptors and their habitat. The little sawhet owl displayed won as many fans as the big Swainson's hawk.

Also in October, *The Big Year* opened at theaters. Based on the book of that title, the movie presents a respectful view of birding, with humor provided by the real story and by stars Steve Martin, Jack Black, and Owen Wilson.

Less dramatic than a raptor festival or a Hollywood movie, but more intimately enjoyed by many of us, are urban birds.

Celebrate Urban Birds, a program of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, focuses on 16 species: American Crow, American Robin, Baltimore Oriole (not in Montana), Barn Swallow, Black-Crowned Night Heron, Brown-Headed Cowbird, Bullock's Oriole (our oriole), Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, House Finch, House Sparrow, Killdeer, Mallard, Mourning Dove, Peregrine Falcon, and Rock Pigeon.

Attracting birds is a matter of food. Protecting birds in cities requires growing native plants, providing bathing and drinking water, cleaning feeders, turning off lights at night during migrations, and keeping cats indoors.

We each can do our bit for birds in the urban habitat we share!

*Anne Millbrooke*

**President**  
**Sacajawea Audubon Society**

## Bird Notes

While driving Dry Creek Road north of Belgrade, Don Bishop watched as dozens of **Sandhill Cranes** gathered north of Reese Creek, during the last half of September. Other observers from around the state started seeing large high flying flocks of cranes moving south, beginning the second week of October.

At the Bridger Ridge hawk watch site, Brian Conelly and John Martineu have witnessed some spectacular flights of raptors this fall. One of these large movements of raptors occurred October 3<sup>rd</sup>, as the birds took advantage of the first major weather front of the fall. They documented raptors of 12 different species moving south along the ridge that day. Among this diverse flight of 240 raptors, was a fairly late **Broad-winged Hawk**. In the course of their work, the hawk watchers have the opportunity to observe other migrants taking advantage of the winds along the Bridgers. During the first week of September, Brian and John saw 4 **White-throated Swifts** moving down the ridge. Later on September 21<sup>st</sup> they spotted 3 **Vaux's Swifts**. **Vaux's Swift** is a very noteworthy bird for this area. There has only been one other **Vaux's** documented in southwestern Montana, and that bird was seen in May, during the spring migration.

Another nice find from the hawk watch site this fall was the **Williamson's Sapsucker**, that Matt Keefer saw September 24<sup>th</sup>. Over the past two or three years **Pileated Woodpeckers** have been seen more and more frequently, with the Bridger Canyon area seemingly the nexus of this activity. For the past three years, Vicki and Al Scharen have had adult **Pileated Woodpeckers** in the neighborhood of their house off of Jackson Creek Road. Vicki and Al had observed the signature oblong holes that **Pileated Woodpeckers** drill, and early this fall they saw a juvenile bird in their yard. A first for Gallatin Valley proper, was the **Pileated Woodpecker** Lou Ann and John Harris first heard, then saw in their yard by Riverside Golf Course, on September 27<sup>th</sup>. Then on October 8<sup>th</sup>, Paulette Epple heard, and then saw a **Pileated**

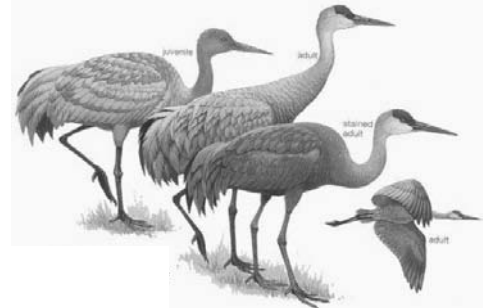
**Woodpecker** feeding in the aspens above Hillside Lane, in northwestern Bozeman. As noted by these observers, the loud distinctive call of the **Pileated Woodpecker** is often the first clue that this crow sized bird is in the area.

Several warblers not often seen in our area were discovered during this fall's migration. On September 13<sup>th</sup>, Ed Harper found a first year **Blackpoll Warbler** at the East Gallatin Recreation Area. Ten days later at the same location, Lou Ann Harris found a lovely **Townsend's Warbler**, which is more likely to be found in the northwestern part of the state. On October 4<sup>th</sup>, Robin Wolcott discovered a **Black-and-White Warbler** at the north end of the Sourdough Nature Trail, where it continued to be seen for two more days. Though fairly common in eastern Montana, **Black-and-White Warblers** are seldom seen as far west as Bozeman.

A **Swamp Sparrow** was found among the cattails in a marsh south of Clyde Park, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, by the team of Ed Harper, Lou Ann Harris, John Parker, and Robin Wolcott. This was by far the rarest bird found during a wide ranging day of birding. This sparrow typically migrates well to the east of Montana, so to find one in the southwestern part of the state was a real treat.

-John Parker

Thank you to all our sharp-eyed birders for reporting your great sightings. Please report your Bird Sightings by the 9<sup>th</sup> of the month to John Parker at 586-5863 or [conundrum@imt.net](mailto:conundrum@imt.net)



## Birding on the Big Screen



If you haven't had a chance, you still can see **The Big Year**, the movie based on the book of the same name by Mark Obmascik. Released nationwide by Fox on Friday, October 14th, 2011 **The Big Year** is the first major Hollywood motion picture devoted to birding. National Audubon served as a resource for the filmmakers, contributing both expertise and Audubon branded materials for set-dressing. The movie even presents a fairly accurate version of Audubon's founding and its history. Look for Audubon appearances in the movie itself! Staring Owen Wilson, Jack Black, and Steve Martin, the movie is a positive, engaging look at birding and birders. You can get a taste of the movie by watching the trailer online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCBAP2wId5M> on your computer. Also, an interview with the actors can be found in the September-October issue of the National Audubon Magazine. **The Big Year** is currently playing at the Hollywood Theaters at the Gallatin Valley Mall on West Main Street, so don't miss this chance to see birding on the big screen! Not a movie-going type? Be sure to pick up the Obmascik book of the same name, a quick and very fun read!

## Cleared for Takeoff!

Have you ever noticed after taking a trip, how it takes a bit of time to transition? Visiting family, taking a much needed vacation, or simply exploring can be rejuvenating experiences, but diving back into the day-to-day is not always a smooth transition. Consider people who travel on a weekly basis for their jobs. Airports, hotels, conferences, meetings, presentations, and the like require layers of adjustment.

Now imagine flying between hundreds of miles up to 6,000 miles to reach a seasonal destination that is at once an instinctive calling and a method of survival. This is no vacation, rather it is the fall migration of raptors. As the nightly temperatures descend, and the crusty frost covers the summer garden, birds of prey get the signal to fly to wintering grounds.

For some, it may be a matter of food source. Many of the small critters that

raptors feed upon in the summer will hibernate. The tasty song birds that the falcons prefer trek to warmer areas, and so go the falcons. Other raptors are simply not as equipped to handle the frigid temperatures of winter. Great horned owls, golden eagles, rough-



legged hawks, and ferruginous hawks have feathers down to their talons, like leg warmers against the cold, while others such as the red-tailed and Swainson's hawks and certainly the baldish turkey vultures do not.

Swainson's hawks are especially impressive in their quest for warmth, as they fly to Argentina for the winter. Jet

lag takes on a whole new meaning when one thinks about that journey. I always look forward to the fall for so many reasons- the leaves changing color, the smells of harvest, the cooler nights for sleeping. But I also take time to reflect on the incredible journeys that birds of prey undertake, as well as how lucky we are in the Gallatin Valley to be able to witness some of these raptors going over the Bridgers on their seasonal trek. Let's hope their transitions continue to mark our own sense of seasonal change.

Montana Raptor Conservation Center is a non-profit raptor rehabilitation and education organization. For more information, check us out on Facebook, visit our website at [www.montanaraptor.org](http://www.montanaraptor.org) or call (406) 585-1211.

-Cynthia Zyzda

Montana Raptor Conservation Center



### Would you like to help with the Montana Audubon Annual Festival?

Montana Audubon is presently looking for an intern in their Helena Office to assist Montana Audubon in the planning, publicity, and implementation of our **Annual Bird Festival**, to be held in Kalispell, June 8-10, 2012. This could be a great way to get communications and marketing experience (possible stipend available). For details see their website at: <http://mtaudubon.org/about/jobs.html>.

### Submit Comments to Protect Arctic Wilderness

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering Wilderness designation for the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge through its Comprehensive Conservation Plan process. More information can be found at the Alaska Audubon website: <http://ak.audubon.org/issues-action/arctic-national-wildlife-refuge>. Comments are due by **November 14, 2011**.

### Audubon released A Flock of Birds Online!

National Audubon is reaching out to new audiences with Audubon's Birding the Net, an online scavenger hunt designed to introduce millions of people to birds and conservation. Several thousand people are already participating in this unprecedented social media initiative, and the numbers are growing as the game goes viral via Facebook. Many of those players are taking Audubon up on their invitation to visit [Audubon.org](http://Audubon.org) – web traffic has doubled since the launch of the game.



### North Carolina Woman Bikes 500 Miles to Benefit Birds!

From October 1 - 8, 2011, Lena Gallitano of Raleigh, NC biked 500 miles across North Carolina to raise money for bird conservation. Lena, a member of Wake Audubon Society and an Audubon North Carolina board member, participated in Cycle North Carolina's Fall Ride from Elkin in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains to Corolla on the northern Outer Banks. She made her effort even more worthwhile by soliciting contributions to her Bike for Birds Campaign, a fundraiser to support Audubon North Carolina's work to conserve and restore the habitat for wildlife, with a focus on birds.

To date, donations to Bike for Birds total \$7,758, and the contributions are still rolling in. Way to go, Lena!



**Sacajawea Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 1711**  
**Bozeman, MT 59771-1711**

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**Sacajawea Audubon Society**, affiliated with the National Audubon Society, meets on the second Monday of each month, September through May.

**Sacajawea Audubon News** is sent to all Sacajawea Audubon Society members monthly September through May. Deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the month articles will appear. Please send to: **Mary Cloud Ammons, 503 Bozeman, Bozeman MT 59715** or [mcammons@gmail.com](mailto:mcammons@gmail.com).

**Change of Address:** Please notify Sally MacDonald, 222-5752 or [smacbirder@msn.com](mailto:smacbirder@msn.com) if your address changes. When you move or are away, newsletters are returned to us for an extra fee.

Find more at the **Sacajawea Audubon Society Website** at: <http://www.sacajaweaudubon.org/>

### *Mailing Address*

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[shoffman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:shoffman@mtaudubon.org)

Montana Bird Hotline: 406-721-9799 to report unusual or out-of-season birds

#### **Membership Application**

**National Audubon Society**  
 (Includes chapter membership)

- National, State and Chapter Audubon Membership
- National Audubon Magazine
- Monthly Sacajawea Audubon newsletter September through May by surface mail or E-mail
- Admission to National Audubon sanctuaries
- Support of National Audubon conservation efforts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20 First Time Member

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive the chapter newsletter by E-mail only.

Mail your check and application to:

**Sacajawea Audubon Society**

Attn: Membership

P.O. Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 597711711

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