



SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

May 2012

Calendar at a Glance

May 14th	SAS May Meeting
May 5th-June 23th	SAS Spring Birding Series
May 11th-June 4th	International Migratory Bird Festival
May 2nd-June 2nd	SAS Birdathon
May 220th	Headwaters IBA Count
June 3rd-June 5th	MT Audubon Bird Festival

HEADWATERS IBA COUNT

The next Headwaters' IBA Citizen Science effort will be **Sunday May 20th, 2012**. We'll meet at the Headwaters' State Park across from the campground in the Visitor's Kiosk parking lot at 7:30am. We'll be walking the trails in an effort to record data on species. May has been historically a very active count with a wide variety of species to be seen. Wet conditions are possible, please wear appropriate foot wear. Please feel free to call Annie Sisk at 406-285-6596 with any questions..



Sweet and Savory



Monday May 14th, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

Hope Lutheran Church

2152 W. Graf Street (off of South 19th) in Bozeman

The Sacajawea Audubon Society will hold its annual Sweet and Savory social, potluck, and annual meeting on Monday May 14th at 7:00 p.m., at the Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf Street (off of South 19th), Bozeman. Come visit with other members who appreciate birds and enjoy birding. Help elect the new leadership team. Enjoy good food. This is the time to relax and enjoy the people who are Audubon.

NEWS FLASH: Marina Skumanich

National Audubon's Regional Representative

is coming to the Montana Audubon Bird Festival!

Marina Skumanich, National Audubon Society's "Regional Representative" on the National Audubon Board, will be at this year's Bird Festival in Kalispell June 7-8. Marina has signed up for one of the pre-festival conservation workshops on Friday, and she will also lead the discussion at the Chapter Forum on Friday afternoon. Discussion topics for the Forum will likely include: 1) New NAS strategic direction with flyway structure and one-Audubon commitment; 2) Chapter issues in relation to NAS; and 3) NAS efforts on conservation issues of particular interest to MT chapters and MT Audubon (e.g., IBAs, climate change, etc.). EVERYONE is welcome to join us for the Chapter Forum and the discussion with Marina, scheduled to start at 2:45 P.M. on Friday, June 8th.

Presidential Comments: Thank you!

Thanks to everyone who made Sacajawea Audubon a success during my term as president.

Thank you, John Parker, for years of work that brought IBA — Important Bird Area — status to Harrison Reservoir. Thanks too for organizing field trips and Christmas Bird Counts.

Thank you, Mary Cloud Ammons, for editing the newsletter.

Thank you, Ron Farmer, for your decades as treasurer, member of the board, and service on committees.

Thank you, Paulette Epple and Annie Sisk, for coordinating the Madison Valley and Missouri Headwaters IBAs, and for your service on the board of directors.

Thank you, John Shellenberger, for diligently pursuing conservation opportunities.

Thank you, Wano Urbonas, for organizing entertaining and informative programs.

Thank you, Diane Gresham, for arranging hospitality at our meetings.

Thanks to Sally MacDonald for coordinating membership.

I could go on. Sacajawea Audubon is many people who volunteer to participate in bird counts, lead field trips, work with the schools, monitor bird houses and habitat, serve on committees, etc., and support conservation through Audubon membership.

Thanks and congratulations to the incoming officers. May they enjoy your support as I have. Sacajawea Audubon is you, and you made the chapter work well during my term. Thank you!

Happy Birding!

Anne Millbrooke

President Sacajawea Audubon Society

Bird Notes

During the third week of March, the **Sandhill Cranes** arrived en masse, with numerous sightings all across southwestern Montana. By the 16th of March, Don Bishop was already seeing several cranes gathering in the Dry Creek area north of Belgrade.

A pair of Cinnamon Teal were spotted by Madeline Leib on a small pond off of Cattail in Bozeman, April 5th.

A March 25th flight of **12 Turkey Vultures** was very early for this area, especially in those numbers. Barbara Geller observed the kettle of vultures circling above Cottonwood and Durston, west of Bozeman.

While hiking west of Four Corners February 25th, Krys Bagwell came across two **Long-eared Owls**. Though Long-eared Owls breed locally, it's quite uncommon to see these thicket loving owls.

Another early bird this spring, was the **Say's Phoebe** Mary Keck saw moving along a fence, at the Cherry River fishing access, April 2nd. In our area, there is only one earlier record for Say's Phoebe.

Just after dawn on April 3rd, I was thrilled to hear a **Varied Thrush** calling behind our house along Hyalite Creek. Then my excitement doubled when another Varied Thrush responded to the first thrush's calls.

From January till later in March, Charles Spangler had a large flock of approximately **25 American Tree Sparrows** coming to his feeders near Pray. A single Tree Sparrow lingered till the rather late date of April 3rd, at Mike Becker's house near Harrison.

During the March 19th and April 7th snowstorms, the Gray-crowned Rosy Finches moved down-slope into the Gallatin Valley. After both of these storms, Kathryn Hiestand and Neal Miller had around **200 Gray-crowned Rosy Finches** coming to their feeders southwest of Bozeman.

-John Parker

Thank you to all our sharp-eyed birders for reporting your great sightings. Please report your Bird Sightings by the 9th of the month to John Parker at 586-5863 or conundrum@imt.net



Montana Audubon's *Wings Across the Big Sky* Bird Festival

Have you registered yet?

Now is the time to register for *Wings Across the Big Sky* in Kalispell (June 8–10) before field trips fill up ... See www.mtaudubon.org/birdwatching/festival.html for the bird-fest lowdown including the link to register online or to download the mail-in form.

Remember: This is a family-friendly event so bring your children or grandchildren—no cost for their registration!

Contact Larissa at 406-443-3949 if you have any questions.

Why Yes, We Gladly Welcome Bird Festival Volunteers ...

If you are interested in volunteering at the festival please contact Kay Mitchell at

kbmitch@centurytel.net. We offer volunteers wishing to go on field trips a discount on registration. We appreciate everyone's part in making this a fun and meaningful experience for all! As always, thanks for your support.

Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!

We are now seeking nominations for 4 awards that will be given away at the annual meeting in Kalispell. The awards acknowledge individuals who exemplify a commitment to conserving birds, other wildlife, and their habitat. The awards will be given for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, and Lifetime Achievement.

To nominate your candidate, please call the Montana Audubon office to request an award nomination form or download the form from our website: www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html. To be considered for this year's award nominations and all supporting material must be postmarked no later than May 23, 2012. Nominations should be sent to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624, or by fax: (406) 443-7144. The award ceremony will take place on June 9th at Montana Audubon's Bird Festival in Kalispell. Questions? Contact Janet Ellis (406-443-3949 or jellis@mtaudubon.org).

2012 Sacajawea Audubon Spring Birding Series

Participants in all trips will meet at the front parking lot of the Museum of the Rockies at 6:45 a.m. and depart at 7:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted. Car pools will be arranged at the museum; an offer to help with gas to the person driving is always appreciated but not mandatory. Dress for the weather; good footwear is a must as field trip conditions are not always dry. Turn off your cell phones and keep unnecessary conversations to a minimum. Some field trips are limited to a certain number of participants. Contact the trip leader for more details about any trip, and to sign up for the trip. We encourage beginning birders to participate.

Come have a good time and learn something new.

◆ May 5: Headwaters State Park (1/2 day; easy walk)

Leader: Annie Sisk, 285-6596

The Headwaters area includes a variety of habitats, including sage/grassland and riparian, so anything from waterfowl to sparrows can occur. One of the unique features of the Headwaters area are the limestone cliffs, which support several cliff nesting species such as Prairie Falcons and White-throated Swifts. The park, which is situated along the Missouri River corridor, is an ideal location to observe early spring migrants. Those wishing to meet at the Headwaters area contact the trip leader. **15 person limit.**

◆ May 12: East Gallatin Recreation Area (4 hr; easy walk)

Leader: Andrew Guttenberg 406-451-5427

This trip covers several habitats in a relatively small area. In the wet riparian areas bordering the East Gallatin River are many early migrants including warblers. The grasslands, brushy areas and lake will provide many opportunities for sparrows, swallows and water birds. At this location, nearly anything is possible. **15 person limit.**

◆ May 19: Fish Technology Center (4 hr; easy walk)

Leader: Lou Ann Harris 406-600-3585

Situated where Bridger Creek flows past the base of Drinking Horse Mountain, this small area is a prime birding spot. Several species of warblers, hummingbirds, flycatchers nest in the willows and dogwood along the stream, and the drier slopes of the adjoining hillsides. This is also one of the best places around to look for American Dippers. **15 person limit.**

◆ May 26: Mount Ellis

Leader: John Parker 586-5863 (4-5 hr; moderately strenuous)

We will explore a variety of habitats including grassland, aspen meadow and conifer forest edge, while we look for late spring migrants. Some of the nesting species include Red-naped Sapsucker, Orange-crowned Warblers, White-crowned Sparrow, among others. **15 person limit.**

◆ June 2: Sourdough Nature Trail (3-4 hr; easy walk)

Leader: Angie Kociolek 406-209-2570

After leaving the MOR parking lot, this trip will begin at the Goldenstein entrance. The trail is an easy, level stroll following Sourdough Creek. This trip is at the peak of spring migration so we should see and hear a variety of flycatchers, thrushes and warblers. Some of the nesting neotropical birds nesting here are Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, and Black-headed Grosbeak. **12 person limit.**

◆ June 3: Rocky Mountain Road Bluebird Trail (1/2 day)

Leader: Lou Ann Harris 600-3585

Get up close and personal with Mountain Bluebirds. Join bluebirders Lou Ann Harris, Diane Gresham and Janne Hayward as they check bluebird nest boxes and band adults and nestlings along Rocky Mountain Road. This is a rare opportunity to get an inside look at the lives of these amazing birds, including nest building, egg laying and raising young. Due to the sensitive nature of the work, we are limiting this field trip to **6 participants**. Inclement weather will cancel the trip. If there is enough interest, a second trip will be added Monday, June 4th.

◆ June 8-10: Please join us at the 2011 Montana Audubon Bird Festival in Kalispell, MT.

Contact Montana Audubon at (406) 443-3949 or go to www.mtaudubon.org. Come join the fun.

◆ June 9: Lewis and Clark Caverns

Leader: Tom Forwood 406-287-3541

Meet at 8AM at the main (lower) visitor's center for a walk around the grounds of the caverns. 50 species of birds have been seen on this five-hour trip and some interesting ones have turned up! Contact the leader for more information.

◆ June 16: Mission Creek (3/4 day; bring lunch)

Leader: Robin Wolcott, 581-5418

After leaving Bozeman, we will meet at Albertson's parking lot in Livingston at 7:30 a.m. and then leave from there at 7:45 a.m. Car-pooling is essential. In the rolling prairie we may find McCown's Longspur, Long-billed Curlew, and raptors. In the Mission Creek Valley we will watch for Wild Turkeys, listen for warblers, and watch for residents of the spruce forest. On the return trip we may see Lark Buntings. We have seen over 110 species along this route, including Sprague's Pipit, Upland Sandpiper, and Broad-winged Hawk.

◆ June 23: Kelly Canyon (driving and walking on roads)

Leader: Ron Farmer, 586-3987

This trip passes through open fields, then climbs past dry juniper covered hillsides, mature wetlands, mixed woodlands, and eventually reaches into the conifer forest. Bluebirds, towhees, kingbirds, hummingbirds, warblers, grosbeaks, and tanagers are just a few of the species that we should see along this route. **Four car limit.**

some steep sections. Wear appropriate clothes and shoes for hiking. **12 person limit.**

This summer, check the Sacajawea Audubon website at www.sacajaweaudubon.org for leader's choice field trips in late July and August.

American Birding Association Principles of Birding Ethics

Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment, and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first.

Code of Birding Ethics

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

1(a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.

1(b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.

* Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas, or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area.

* Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, filming, photography, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover.

* Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

1(c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized, and permission has been obtained from

private landowners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

1(d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law, and the rights of others.

2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.

2(b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.

2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

3(a) Keep dispensers, water, and food clean and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.

3(b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

3(c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure that birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or to dangers posed by artificial hazards.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations spelled out in Items #1 and #2, has responsibilities as a Group Member.

4(a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

4(b) If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation, and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action, and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it, and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

Group Leader Responsibilities [amateur and professional trips and tours]:

4(c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.

4(d) Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment, and that does not interfere with others in the same area.

4(e) Ensure that everyone in the group knows of and practices this code.

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How Lucky We Are...



Eagles, hawks, owls, falcons, harriers and vultures represent some of our wild neighbors in

Montana. And the variety of these winged creatures that grace the big sky is pretty amazing compared to many other states. Big contributors to this are climate and habitat. Just think, you could drive across Montana and experience high desert, grasslands, river valleys, forests, and mountains. This wonderland creates excellent breeding and hunting grounds for birds of prey.

As you play outside in the beautiful Montana summer, be sure to look up and match the raptor to the region. Of course, we all know that bald eagles hang out near rivers to fish, but they also eat small mammals as well. In fact, the other day, I saw a bald eagle snatch a ground squirrel snack and fly off with it (probably taking it to its nest). Golden eagles prefer the open sage and grasslands, as jackrabbits

are high on their favorite food list. The big hawks position themselves on power poles or soar over the fields in search of voles, mice and other field critters, while the accipiter's fancy flight moves work well in forests and near bird feeders, speeding after small birds. Owls choose a variety of habitats. Great horned owls are incredibly adaptive to urban and rural



areas, while many owls, such as the Northern Saw-whet enjoy the forest terrain. Falcons, such as the prairie falcon inhabit arid regions and grasslands in search of small mammals and birds, with fierce speed and a powerful punch. To spy a harrier in flight, look closer to the ground for its shadow first. Northern harriers

nest in the ground and are often seen hunting close to the grasses. And last, but not least, the clean-up crew of turkey vultures can be noticed teetering in flight, like a kite, in search of dead things to eat.

So, as you trade your winter wear for summer gear and head out into the rivers, mountains, forests and open lands, take a moment to think about how lucky we are in Montana to live amongst these amazing creatures!

If you don't get enough raptor watching this summer and want a closer look, call Montana Raptor Conservation Center to ask about education programs for families, school groups, and community organizations.

And remember, report an injured raptor quickly! You are the first step in saving a life! (406) 585-1211

Happy Summer!

Article by Cynthia Zyzda

Photos by Becky Kean

Celebrate the 20th Anniversary International Migratory Bird Day: Connecting People to Bird Conservation

Learn more about our fine-feathered friends through *free* lectures and field trips presented by experts in avian resources. IMBD offerings are open to community members of all ages. Please sign up for evening lectures and field trips through the Livingston Adult Community Education website @ www.livingstonace.org. Call Rachel Feigley, Yellowstone District Wildlife Biologist, for more information at 222-1892 or 823-6064!

**Lecture series to be held at Washington School,
315 N. 8th Street, Livingston**

Wednesday, May 2

7:00-8:00 p.m. Raptor Conservation Through Rehabilitation

Presenter: Montana Raptor Conservation Center staff

8:15-9:15 p.m. Beetles and Fire in Bird Conservation

Presenter: Victoria Saab; USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station, Research Biologist

Wednesday, May 9

7:00-8:00 p.m. The Southern Ocean-Bird Ecological Connection

Presenter: Peter Murray, photographer and Mary Swanson

8:15-9:15 p.m. The ABCs of Bird Watching

Presenter: Pete Feigley, PHD, Absaroka Ecological Consulting

Tuesday, May 22

5:30-6:00 p.m. Helping Birds in 20 Easy Ways Everyday!

Presenter: Rachel Feigley, US Forest Service Wildlife Biologist

Field trips: Bring binoculars, field guide, water and snacks, and dress appropriately. Times are approximate and depend on weather and participant level of interest.

May 12, 7:30 a.m. -1:00 p.m. Connecting People to Bird Conservation! Presented by Rachel Feigley, USFS Wildlife Biologist & knowledgeable field guides, including Robin and Richard Wolcott, Peter Feigley of Absaroka Ecological Consulting, and Peter Norlander, vice-president Montana Audubon Board. Meet at the Yellowstone Ranger District, Livingston Office, 5242 Hwy 89 South.

May 18, 8:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. Short-Grass Prairie Birds! Presented by Beth Madden, Wildlife Biologist and Rachel Feigley, US Forest Service Wildlife Biologist. Meet at the Yellowstone Ranger District, Big Timber Office, 225 Big Timber Loop Road.

May 22, 4:15-5:15 p.m. Family Walk!

Presented by Rachel Feigley, US Forest Service Wildlife Biologist and Links for Learning Staff. Meet at the Bozeman Trail Connector Trailhead, corner of Star Road and Northern Lights Road.

June 2, 8:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m. Bluebird Box Monitoring and Banding Demonstration! Presented by Neil Travis, Master Permit Holder, Federal Bird Bander Meet at the Yellowstone Ranger District, Livingston Office, 5242 Hwy 89 South.



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 10th of the month preceding the month articles will appear. Please send to: **Mary Cloud Ammons, 503 Bozeman, Bozeman MT 59715** or mcammons@gmail.com.

Change of Address: Please notify **Sally MacDonald, 222-5752** or 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

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Vice President	OPEN		
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Publicity Chair	OPEN		
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Webmaster	OPEN		

Montana Audubon: 406-443-3949; PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624;

mtaudubon@mtaudubon.org; www.mtaudubon.org For direct contact:

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: _____

Address: _____

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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