



SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

December 2010

Calendar at a Glance

- December 9th Get your bird sightings to John Parker!
- December 13th Sacajawea Audubon Society Meeting
- December 14th-26th Christmas Bird Count



FOR SALE: Nikon 60mm ED Fieldscope angled spotting scope with 20-60x zoom eyepiece. Excellent condition. Padded carrying case included. Asking \$400. Contact Lou Ann at (406) 600-3585 or email: montlou@earthlink.net

Golden Plovers Around the World!

December 13th at 7:00 pm
First Security Bank West
670 South 19th Street in Bozeman
Downstairs Community Room



All three species of golden-plovers — Eurasian, American, and Pacific — will be covered in this illustrated program. Dr. Wally Johnson will discuss the basic biology of each species with an emphasis on their current status and conservation.

These birds are among the world's most impressive long-distance migrants as they travel nonstop over vast oceanic pathways between wintering and breeding areas. The breeding areas are on northern tundras. Regarding the Pacific Golden-Plover, he will describe some of the ongoing studies using new geolocator technology to track trans-Pacific migration.

This presentation derives from a plover research project that has been ongoing for more than thirty years. Dr. Johnson has a doctorate in zoology from Washington State University. He was formerly a Professor of Biology at Minnesota State University, Moorhead, and he is currently an Affiliate Professor of Ecology at Montana State in Bozeman.

Photo: Dr. Wally Johnson releases a banded Pacific Golden-Plover on the tundra of the Seward Peninsula in Alaska. Photo by Anne Millbrooke.

110th Annual Christmas Bird Count

Come join the fun in one of our area's Christmas Bird Counts. For more information, contact the count compilers. There is a \$5.00 (kids are free) participation fee. This money is sent to the National Audubon Society to pay for compiling and publishing the results of all of the Christmas Bird Counts.

Ennis Tuesday, December 14th
 Compiler: Robin Wolcott 582-0070
 Meet at Yesterdays Café in the Ennis Pharmacy at 7:30AM

Bozeman Saturday, December 18th
 Compiler: John Parker 586-5863
 Meet at Perkins Restaurant, 2505 West Main, Bozeman, between 7:00-7:30AM

West Yellowstone Sunday, December 19th
 Compiler: John Heinie (w) 646-7001 (h) (406)640-0124
 Meet at the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center, West Yellowstone at 8:30 AM

Livingston Sunday, December 19th
 Compiler: Sally MacDonald 222-5752 or 223-9167
 Meet between 7:00-7:30 AM, call Sally for the meeting place

Three Forks Sunday, December 26th
 Compiler: Dennis Flath 406-539-1145
 Meet at Bair's Truck Stop (Flying J at the South side of the Belgrade Interchange) at 7:00 AM

President's Comments: Christmas Bird Counts

Christmas bird counts may date from the medieval love song "The Twelve Days of Christmas." This popular English song derived from a French song about lovers during the Christmastide. A lover in the song sent daily gifts: one partridge on the first day, two turtle doves on the second, and three French hens on the third. These were game birds, food. On the fourth day the four calling birds were actually colly, black as coal — in other words, blackbirds. The fifth day brought five golden rings, ringed-necked birds, possibly the ring-necked pheasants that had been introduced from Asia. The sixth day brought six domesticated geese-a-laying, and on the seventh day seven swans swam into the song.

Began Christmas Day 1900, the Audubon tradition is to count birds for conservation purposes. Members of Audubon and the public collectively conduct a wild bird census that is used to assess the health of populations and to inform conservation decisions. Please join one of the Christmas bird counts in our area.

By the way, a favorite holiday tradition of mine comes from Finland where the holiday feast cannot begin until birds have come to enjoy treats set out for them.

Happy Holidays!

Anne Millbrooke

SAS President

Bird Notes!

Here in southwestern Montana, the area's lakes and reservoirs are a great place to be during the late fall migration. As most of the songbirds have already moved further south, these bodies of water offer the opportunity to study and enjoy seeing hundreds of birds at a time.

On the October 23rd Sacajawea field trip to Ennis Lake, the participants got to see around 50 species of birds, including 15 species of waterfowl. Definitely one of the highlights was watching **Common Loons** in various stages of molt, diving and catching fish under and around the Ennis Lake bridge. In that same area we were able to closely compare **Eared and Horned Grebes** in their winter plumages. At the Meadow Lake fishing access Paulette Epple located an **American Tree Sparrow** which for many of us, was a first for the season.

At Harrison Lake on October 21st, Chris Nixon, Lou Ann Harris and I were very surprised to see **3 Cattle Egrets** on the far shore. The egrets were actively feeding on insects both on the ground and snapping them out of the air. Three days later at Harrison, Andrew Guttenberg discovered another uncommon visitor to southwestern Montana...a **Pacific Loon**.

As they were driving around the Gallatin Valley photographing raptors November 5th, Jeff Pentel and Don Bryant got some great looks and photos of a juvenile grey phase **Gyr Falcon**.

During the first week of November, Irene Wuls had a **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, casing her northwest Belgrade yard for the finches and sparrows coming to the feeder.

Gail Richardson was thrilled to see a flock of about **150 Sandhill Cranes** November 3rd and 4th. What a grand sight to see such a large late season flock of cranes feeding and frolicking in a stubble field several miles south of Livingston.

The week of November 8th, Lori Micken counted **25 Evening Grosbeaks** on and off her feeds outside of Livingston. Also, on November 16th, Lori officially declared winter with **10 Grey-Crowned Rosy Finches**.

On October 22nd, Mark Donahue spotted a **Nashville Warbler** in among the lilacs in his Gardiner yard. Never a very common migrant in our area, this individual warbler was especially notable for being seen on such a late date...

-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



News from the Montana Raptor Conservation Center

Over 2500 visitors found their way up the mountain to Bridger Bowl for the annual Raptor Fest in October where they had an opportunity to come face to face with a variety of education birds and to make the climb up the Bridgers to witness the fall migration. A flock of organizations and their volunteers met the public, answering a host of questions that ranged from what is that to how long do they live. A line up of stimulating speakers provided interesting talks for both the novice and practiced birder.

The Montana Raptor Conservation Center, one of several organizations hosting the event, came to the event with displays, photo albums of our successfully relaunched clients, a quilt with life-sized raptor silhouettes, raffle tickets, hands-on displays, and most popular of all, live education birds. Raffle ticket sales (including a season ski pass and many other notable prizes) help defray the centers operating costs. This year red Vulture hats and tee shirt sales nearly sold out, helping our cause.

MRCC's Education Birds are an annual favorite at this event. All of our education birds acted as ambassadors to birding and raptor education over the weekend. These birds, all rehabilitated to healthy lives, are not releasable. Instead they work year-round in educating the public about raptors and their roles in the environment. Because they are critical to the center's success, MRCC

would like to introduce you to these important members of our education staff:



SAMMY, a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), weighing 3 pounds and sporting a 54 inch wingspan today, was blown out of her nest as a nestling during a severe storm near Amsterday MT in June, 1993. Abandoned and suffering from the loss of an eye in the fall, she came to MRCC. Red-tailed hawks are the most common and sidespread of hawks in North America and demonstrate many plumage variations across the country. Some Red-tailed hawks migrate away from Montana, while others remain year-round. Sammy, like all of the Education Birds, is displayed by permission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Permit #PRT-810728).



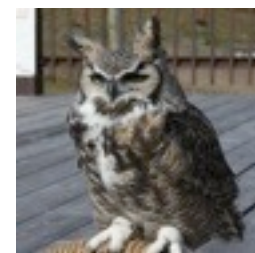
PILGRIM, a female Turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), evokes

comments than any other of our raptors owing to her red, bald pate. With a 70 inch wing span, she had a run-in with a power line near Whitehall MT in October, 1993. Even with repairs, she could not sustain the soaring flight required of vultures in the wild, and joined the Education staff. "Pill" now cleans up carefully refrigerated wildlife contributions rather than the carrion found along

roadsides and landscapes. Since she can not migrate south to enjoy thermal-driven flight over warmer climes, she spends her winters indoors, posing in a window to catch some sun on her ray absorbing black feathers.



CHACO, a Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), weighs in at 1 and ½ pounds. Chaco was found as a fledgling outside of Great Falls in September of 2001 with a congenitally deformed left humerus which prevents him from flying. Since his species annually migrates to Argentina, Chaco found himself at MRCC rather than flocking south for the winter. He is named for the Argentine Provence where his species concentrate for the winter.



BU, a Great-horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), weighs in at 3 pounds and has a 48 inch wingspan. Bu,

short for the owl's genus name *Bubo*, imprinted on his human caretakers during a critically formative period in his nestling youth. He arrived at the MRCC sometime later in August of 1999. Great-horned owls have a poor sense of smell and are, therefore, able to consume skunks with little olfactory inconvenience.

Save the Date!

Join Audubon Nebraska for the 41st Annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration **March 17-20, 2011**, in Kearney, Nebraska. Gather with wildlife enthusiasts from around the world to celebrate the annual migration of 500,000 sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl through central Nebraska. Celebration highlights include: sunrise and

sunset visits to crane viewing blinds along the Platte River, day-long and half-day excursions to local wetlands and lakes to view migrating waterfowl and native Nebraska wildlife, the Wild Experience Room with live animal demonstrations and nature related fun for the whole family.. For more information and to register visit: www.nebraska.audubon.org/RWC.htm



Sacajawea Audubon Society
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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. Send announcements for upcoming activities to **Jennie Chalet, jenniechalet@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

President	Anne Millbrooke	599-1096	anne27m@yahoo.com
Vice President	OPEN		
Treasurer	Ron Farmer	586-3987	songbird@wispwest.net
Secretary	OPEN		
Past President	Peter Norlander	222-4646	norlander@q.com
Board members	Andrew Guttenberg	585-2623	afgutte@hotmail.com
	Lou Ann Harris	587-2777	montlou@earthlink.net
	Diane Gresham	624-6339	dgresham@bresnan.net
	Loreene Reid	600-6666	
Audubon Adventures	Monica Brelsford	388-6125	mbrelsford@montana.edu
Field trips, Bird Count and Bird Sightings	John Parker	586-5863	conundrum@imt.net
Conservation Chair	John Shellenberger		jshell@ecafinan.com
Hospitality/Coffee	Diane Gresham	624-6339	dgresham@bresnan.net
Membership Records	Sally MacDonald	222-5752	smacbirder@msn.com
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Program Chair	OPEN		
Publicity Chair	Jennie Chalet	914-629-9163	jenniechalet@gmail.com
School Outreach	Monica Brelsford	388-6125	mbrelsford@montana.edu
Webmaster	Jeff Pentel	586-3534	jpentel@wispwest.net

Would you like to join Audubon? Clip here:

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

NAS Membership includes:

- National, state, and chapter membership
- Quarterly Audubon magazine and chapter newsletter September through May
- Admission to Audubon sanctuaries
- Support of conservation efforts

- \$20 for First Time Member
 \$15 for Seniors (62+) or Students
 _____ Amount enclosed

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____
 Zip: _____ Email: _____

Mail this application and your check to
Sacajawea Audubon Society
 PO Box 1711
 Bozeman, MT 59771-1711
 (N51 / 7XCH)

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

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