



SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

January 2011

Calendar at a Glance

January 9th	Get your bird sightings to John Parker!
January 10th	Sacajawea Audubon Society Meeting
January 24th	National Audubon mail-in and online proxies due



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Building the American Prairie Reserve on Montana's Northern Prairie

Sacajawea Audubon Society Meeting
January 10, 2011, at 7:00 pm
Downstairs Community Room
First Security Bank South 19th
670 South 19th Street, Bozeman

Alison Fox of the American Prairie Foundation will present a slide show on "Building the American Prairie Reserve on Montana's Northern Prairie" at the January meeting. The American Prairie Foundation is working to create a thriving wildlife reserve on Northern Prairie grasslands. Already more than a hundred thousand acres, the American Prairie Reserve eventually will comprise nearly three million acres of private and public land in north central Montana. In 2009, a total of 132 species of birds were observed on the reserve. National Geographic recently featured the American Prairie Reserve in the film American Serengeti and called it "one of the most ambitious conservation projects in American history."

Fox is Partnership and Marketing Manager at the American Prairie Foundation, which is based in Bozeman. She joined American Prairie Foundation three years ago, and she directs marketing initiatives, supports institutional partnerships, and serves as a liaison to the organization's National Council. A graduate of Dartmouth College and Georgetown University, she previously held roles in marketing and communications at RightNow Technologies. Ali and her husband Jeff live in Bozeman and enjoy outdoor activities.

Participate in the 2011 Election of Audubon's Directors

Read about the candidates at:
<http://www.audubon.org/nominees-election-board-directors-national-audubon-society>.

You can cast your proxy in one of three ways.

- First, you can submit one proxy by mail. You can find a proxy card bound in Audubon Magazine, between pages 96-97 of the November/December 2010 issue.
- As an alternative, if you allow Audubon to contact you by email, you can disregard the proxy card and submit your proxy online. Audubon sends an occasional proxy request email to its email subscribers. If you have any questions about the online proxy, please contact: Proxy.vote@audubon.org.
- Mail-in and online proxies must be received by Monday, January 24, 2011.
- The third option is to join us at the Annual Meeting, if you will be in the area. Audubon's 2011 Annual Meeting of Members will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, January 28, 2011 at the Naples Beach Hotel, 851 Gulf Shore Boulevard North, Naples, Florida 34102. If you will join us in person, you should disregard the mail-in and online proxy options.

By participating in the election of Audubon's directors, you help play a vital role in Audubon's conservation efforts. Thank you for everything you do!

President's Comments: Birding by Book

While winter birding has its own rewards, some January days seem to be made for birding by book. You may browse your field guide to birds, but there are some good reads in birding literature too.

Phoebe Snetsinger was the first birder in world history to see over 8,000 different species of birds. Her autobiography *Birding on Borrowed Time* is a tale of world travel and adventure in pursuit of birds.

To See Every Bird on Earth, a Father, a Son, and a Lifelong Obsession, is told from the perspective of the son, author Dan Koeppel, whose father was off adding birds to a life list that eventually numbered over 7,000 species.

In *The Big Year, a Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession*, Mark Obmascik reports on birding as competition, a yearlong contest between three men to see the most species.

Pilgrim on the Great Bird Continent, by Lyanda Lynn Haupt, takes us back into history and into Charles Darwin's lost notebooks.

Jacqueline Winspear's *Birds of a Feather* and Augusta Trobaugh's *Tea-Olive Bird Watching Society* are novels, the former set in Britain during World War I and the latter set in a small town in the South.

Happy Birding!

Anne Millbrooke

SAS President

Bird Notes!

With the arrival of the first real blast of winter weather in November, many Sacajawea members from Harrison to Livingston reported flocks of **Snow Geese** moving east and west or circling over this area's valleys. Strong southerly winds, starting on the 17th and continuing till the 20th, apparently stalled the final push of migrating Snow Geese over our area. On the afternoon of the 19th, I located a flock of over 2,000 birds that were foraging in the snow covered stubble of a wheat field three miles south of Bozeman. Then during a brief pause in the stormy weather on the 20th, the geese were last seen flying to the east. Rarely are we treated to such a spectacle, as typically most of the Snow Goose migration passes either to the west or east of these high mountain valleys. What a thrill to hear the calls of Snow Geese during the night, or to see their ragged skeins appearing out of the snow clouds.

A single lingering **Sandhill Crane** was seen flying over Cottonwood Road west of Bozeman, November 26th, by Dave and Jinnie Milne. On November 19th, Mike Becker saw another late migrant, a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** that was in the willows around his house near

Harrison. For either of these species there are only a handful of records from mid November till March.

While on a walk up the Lewis and Clark Caverns road December 4th, Jeff Pentel was treated to the sight and sounds of numerous **American Robins** and **Townsend's Solitaires** on the adjacent hillsides. It's such a pleasure to hear the winter songs of these hardy thrushes. Four days later, Jeff saw a Western Meadowlark on some hay bales along Love Lane west 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



American Robin

Winter Residents of the Big Sky



As the snow has fallen, the bitter winds have blown and the temperatures have dropped, you may have noticed that many of our feathered

friends have gone on vacation to warmer climates. Who would blame them? But if you look closely at the telephone poles, and up in the skies you may have seen one raptor that loves the winter in Montana- the Rough Legged Hawk. As would be expected, these birds of prey have feathers down to their feet, hence their name, and their ability to

withstand a Montana winter. Their plumages do vary, including light and dark morphs, but you will usually see a dark belly band as well as a dark area under the wings, at the wrist, while in flight. Because a rough legged hawk's diet is mainly rodents, you should notice quite a few of them perched near open fields, ready to stoop on an unsuspecting field mouse.

Since the change in weather, the Montana Raptor Conservation Center has admitted two rough legged hawks, with a total of six rough legged hawks for all of 2010. One (RLHA 147-10), an adult, female came in after being hit by a car, with a nasty fracture to the right humerus that was surgically pinned at All West Veterinary. Her wing will remain

wrapped for a couple of weeks before the pin can be removed. She will then undergo physical therapy and exercise to promote healing and with luck and hard work, we hope to release her. This will be her second release, as last year this raptor paid a visit to MRCC after being hit by a car. We sincerely hope that this rough legged hawk will stop chasing cars and stick with rodents.

-Cynthia Zyzda

Assistant Director
Montana Raptor Conservation Center
mrcc960@aol.com

Photo: MRCC Volunteer, Ray Zimney with RLHA 147-10

Audubon on the Great Western Prairies

Bound for the Yellowstone River, John James Audubon left St. Louis in late March 1843. Here are some excerpts from his journal upriver, sometimes called his Missouri River journal.

May 8. To-day we passed the boundary of Missouri, and the country consists of prairies extending back to the inland hills.

June 3, Saturday. Alexis went off last night at eleven o'clock, walked about fifteen miles, and returned at ten this morning; he brought three Prairie Dogs, or, as I call them, Prairie Marmots.... The three Marmots had been killed with shot quite too large, and not one of them was fit for drawing, or even skinning.... I received no further intelligence about the habits of this species, except that they are quite numerous in every direction.

We passed four rivers to-day; the Little Chayenne, the Moroe, the Grand, and the Rampart. The Moroe is a handsome stream and, I am told, has been formerly a good one for Beaver. It is navigable for barges for a considerable distance.

We saw one Goose with a gosling, several Coots, Grebes, Blue Herons, Doves, Magpies, Red-shafted Woodpeckers, etc. On a sand-bar Bell counted ten Wolves feeding on some carcass. We also saw three young whelps. This morning we saw a large number of Black-headed Gulls feeding on a dead Buffalo with some Ravens; the Gulls probably were feeding on the worms, or other insects about the carcass. We saw four Elks, and a large gang of Buffaloes. One Wolf was seen crossing the river towards our boat; being fired at, it wheeled round, but turned towards us again, again wheeled round, and returned to where it had started. We ran this evening till our wood was exhausted, and I do not know how we will manage to-morrow. Good-night. God bless you all.

On June 12 Audubon arrived at Fort Union, having made the shortest trip from St. Louis on record, just forty-eight days. He was now at the mouth of the Yellowstone River.



Sacajawea Audubon Society
P.O. Box 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. 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

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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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