



SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

March 2011

Calendar at a Glance

- March 5th SAS Raptor Field Trip
- March 12th Headwaters IBA Count
- March 14th SAS March Meeting
- March 26th SAS Owl Prowl Field Trip
- March 26th MT Audubon Freezeout Lake Field Trip
- May 16th Mt Audubon Award Nominations Due

Headwaters IBA Count

Support citizen science efforts at the Headwaters IBA this year. The first survey is scheduled for March 12th. We'll meet at the Visitor's Kiosk across from the campground at Headwaters SP at 8am. Because of the trail access in the park we have lots of options for walking and the area can be covered easily within a four hour period. There is also the option of doing a vehicle based survey. Please let **Annie Sisk** know if you're interested in helping out at **581-7202** or **rnr605@hotmail.com**



Wind Farms and Seabirds in British Columbia: Lessons for Montana

Monday, March 14, 2011, at 7:00 pm
Downstairs Community Room
First Security Bank, 670 South 19th Street
Bozeman, Montana

The Craighead Institute completed a spatial analysis of possible conflicts between wind farms and seabirds in British Columbia in partnership with two Canadian environmental groups. Lance Craighead, Executive Director of the Craighead Institute, will report on that project. He will discuss the British Columbia coast and islands, the feasibility of developing wind power there, the birds that could be negatively impacted, general problems with birds, bats, and windpower, and the costs and benefits of developing wind power. His project has focused on the potential negative environmental impacts of wind farms and where the negative impacts on seabirds would be most likely. After the illustrated presentation on the British Columbia project, he welcomes discussion of the lessons for Montana.

Lance Craighead, PhD, is an experienced field ecologist, population geneticist, and GIS technician with several years of experience in conservation planning. As the Executive Director of the Craighead Institute since 1994 he coordinates research; helping synthesize results and directing communications, fundraising, and development. He completed his Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from Montana State University in 1994 studying grizzly bear genetics in the Alaskan arctic and is currently a Research Affiliate Professor of Ecology at MSU.

President's Comments: IBAs need you!

Important Bird Areas are areas important to birds, not necessarily to birders, but birders provide important services to protect the birds and habitats within an IBA.

BirdLife International began the Important Bird Areas or IBA program in 1985, and Audubon helps administer the program in the United States. Volunteers identify areas essential for birds, monitor those sites for changes to birds and habitat, and conserve these areas.

Sacajawea Audubon assists with three recognized IBAs, including the approximately 20,000-acre Madison Valley IBA, the nearby 4,700-acre Sun Ranch IBA, and the 530-acre Missouri Headwaters State Park. Obviously, IBAs can be large or small and can encompass private or public lands.

Sacajawea Audubon is also gathering data on Harrison Lake, the Bridger Raptor Flyway, and other areas that may be important to birds. We need volunteers to help with existing IBAs and potential IBAs. As BirdLife International says, "A healthy environment is good for both birds and people."

You can help by volunteering now. You can participate in a field trip to learn more about an area and the birds there. You can count birds on a survey day. You can work on a conservation plan. You can make a difference—now.

Anne Millbrooke
SAS President



Upcoming Field Trip Opportunities

Sacajawea Audubon Raptor Field Trip

Join us on Saturday, March 5th for a morning searching for raptors, along the roads of the northern Gallatin Valley. On this early spring trip the focus will be on finding raptors, but there should be some other interesting birds along this route. The trip ends early in the afternoon at Central Park Pond. We will meet at the Museum of the Rockies at 8:30 am, and leave at 8:45. Be sure to dress for the weather and bring any necessary drinks or snacks for this 4-5 hour trip. For more information call John Parker at 586-5863.

Sacajawea Audubon Owl Prowl Field Trip

Come join us for an Owl Prowl with Sacajawea Audubon this winter. The Owl Prowl will be held on Saturday March 26th and will be held in the Battle Ridge Campground (up in the Bridgers) area. We will hope to hear (and maybe find) Boreal Owls, possibly Northern Saw-Whet, possibly Great Gray. We will meet at the City Hall Parking Lot (on Rouse) at 7:30 PM. Snowshoes will be required for this trip and there will be an 8 person maximum. Please call Peter Norlander 222-4646 to sign up. There will be a short discussion of owl lore, prior to leaving by car to the trail.

Please note that due to increased human activities in past locations for the Owl Prowls have inhibited owl breeding and nesting behavior. Please contact Peter Norlander if you have any questions (norlander@q.com, 222-4646). Please dress appropriately for Nighttime Winter/Cold Spring weather with snow boots or warm waterproof boots (no sneakers). You may bring binoculars and a flashlight. Snowshoes will be required for this night time excursion.

Montana Audubon Freezeout Lake Field Trip

Freezeout Lake is Montana's primary snow goose staging area, a place where as many as 300,000 snow geese and 10,000 tundra swans gather and rest before flying onward. Each spring the snow geese head for Canada where they mass with hundreds of thousands of snow geese from Gulf Coast States. They then make their way to nesting grounds on the wind swept, extreme northwest Arctic coast of Canada. The Snow Geese usually reach Freezeout Lake in early March, where they rest up from a nearly 1,000 mile flight. Join us for a one-day excursion to see this awe-inspiring sight. A van will be available to drive as a group from Helena. There will be a \$25/person charge to offset transportation costs.



Bird Notes

As expected, during mid winter, unusual or notable bird sightings have been few. One of the best cures for the winter doldrums is to spend an hour at Central Park Pond. It's especially rewarding to time your visit during the afternoon on a sunny day. On January 28th, Mark Donahue and I were able to find 14 species of waterfowl (among the thousands of Mallards), and a single American Coot on the pond. Notable were the 2 female **Northern Shovelers**, 1 female **Ruddy Duck**, and **26 Trumpeter Swans** (13 cygnets). The close up views of Barrow's Goldeneye and Hooded Mergansers displaying in the sunshine were dazzling. The following day, Mary and John Griffith found a single **American Robin**, just to the south of the pond, along Heeb Road.

A pair of **Great Horned Owls** have been courting in Teri Sinopoli's yard off of Airport Road, through January and into February. She says that they nested behind their house last year.

The bird of the winter was discovered independently by two different groups on the east side of the East Gallatin Recreation Area. On February 2nd, Lou Ann and John Harris spotted a **Hermit Thrush** foraging along an open ditch, then two days later at the same location, Neal Miller and Kathryn Hiestand saw this rare winter hold over. Previous to this discovery there were only two other winter records (December 5th and January 2nd) for this area. March is now the only month that the Hermit Thrush has not been documented locally.

From the east side of the Bridgers, near Sedan, Bob Sisk reports having **14 American Goldfinch** visiting their feeder and the nearby alders. The goldfinches have been frequenting the area throughout the winter. After several decades in this spot, Bob says this is the first time they've seen goldfinch at this mountainous location in the winter. It's that time of year to be looking for the first bluebird of the season!

-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

Getting the Lead Out: A Bald Eagle's Tale

It was almost dark, around 4:30 p.m. when we received the call at the Raptor Center about a bald eagle spotted in the middle of River Road in Bozeman. Becky Kean (MRCC Director) and I grabbed a large pet carrier, gloves and towels, and hopped in her car to hopefully rescue the bird. The location did not give us a clear clue as to the possible cause of injury or illness, as he could have been hit by a car, had electrical contact from power lines near the road, or he could have ingested a toxin.

The little amount of light that was left when we arrived at the location was slightly enhanced by the reflection off of the white snow. But the eagle had moved into the adjacent field, and he looked pretty down. Becky and I had corralled eagles in fields before, so we moved into formation, with Becky making a wide circle to go behind him and flush him my direction, if he decided to move again. There were two things we did not plan on: 1) that the field was a potato field with significant hills and valleys not visible due to the snow, and 2) that the winds would increase, allowing the eagle to spread his wings and glide away all the way across the fence, near the river. We were already tired from navigating the potato field, as we watched the eagle glide over the fence, but we looked at one another and started trotting toward the area where we thought the eagle had landed.

Becky was out in front, and by the time I reached the fence, it was really dark, so I had to follow her footsteps in the snow. She had been searching the

trees, and as you can imagine, finding a brown and white bird amidst snow cover and trees in the dark is challenging. I called for her, and she had not yet found him, so we split up to make more ground. Finally, after much trudging in the snow, I just happened to see his head move. It was complete luck. He was on the ground, and did not look well. I called out to Becky, we caught him, and went back over the fence and maneuvered through the potato field, taking turns carrying the large eagle.



When we arrived back at the Raptor Center, soaking wet and a bit worn out, the bald eagle was having a seizure in the carrier, definitely a worrisome sign. From his demeanor, lethargy, and odd head movements, it seemed that toxicity was rapidly moving to the top of the list as a diagnosis. His x-ray revealed three lead fragments in his abdomen, so we began chelating (kee-lay-ting) treatment, along with milk of magnesia and fluids to attempt to bind the lead fragments and pass them through his system—essentially to get the lead out.

Most likely, this eagle ingested the lead from an animal that had been shot. When lead is ingested, it leeches into the

system, and competes with calcium. It is deposited throughout the body, and has adverse effects on the reproductive and nervous systems. The University of Minnesota Raptor Center has been studying the rates and effects of lead in bald eagles since 1980, according to a recent pamphlet they published. They have consistently seen 23% of admitted bald eagles at their center suffering from lead poisoning.

Bald Eagle 151-10 has now been at MRCC for a month. He has gone through three rounds of twice daily treatments with calcium EDTA, with two day breaks in between each five day treatment period. After the second round of treatment, his blood lead levels were still well above toxic levels. The eagle's coordination and head movements have improved, along with his strength. It is a real challenge to catch him for treatments now.

While I was writing this article, his most recent blood test results were faxed in. Unfortunately, the bald eagle needs another five day round of chelating treatments. His lead levels decreased considerably from the last test, but the numbers are still above toxic levels. We are hopeful that after this fourth session of treatments, that he will be lead free. Then we can begin the reconditioning process, so that BAEA151-10 can get back to the business of being an eagle, and soar without the burden of that heavy lead.

- Cynthia Zyzda

Montana Raptor Conservation Center

Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!

We are now seeking nominations for 4 awards that will be given away at Montana Audubon's annual meeting this year. The awards acknowledge individuals who exemplify a commitment to birds, other wildlife, and habitat conservation. This year awards will be given for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, and Lifetime Achievement Award.

To nominate your candidate, please call the Montana Audubon office to request an award nomination form or download the form from our website at <http://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 16, 2011. All nominations and supporting material 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 4 at Montana Audubon's Bird Festival in Glasgow. Questions? Contact Janet Ellis at 406-443-3949 or jellis@mtaudubon.org.





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

Change Service Requested

**Non-Profit
 Organization**
 U.S. Postage Paid
 Bozeman, MT 59771
 Permit No. 106

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
	Chris Nixon	544-4901	christophernixon@yahoo.com
	Annie Sisk	285-6596	rmr605@hotmail.com
	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
Newsletter Ed./Design	Mary Cloud Ammons	600-0301	mcammons@gmail.com
Program Chair	OPEN		
Publicity Chair	OPEN		
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

The Sacajawea Audubon Society Newsletter is Printed on 100% Recycled Paper