



# SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

April 2011

## Calendar at a Glance

April 11th	SAS April Meeting
March 12th	Headwaters IBA Count
March 14th	SAS March Meeting
March 26th	SAS Owl Prowl Field Trip
May 14th-June 19th	SAS Birdathon
May 16th	Mt Audubon Award Nominations Due

## Announcing the 2011 Sacajawea Audubon Birdathon!

Sacajawea Audubon Birdathon Committee would like to announce our 2011 Birdathon. Identify as many bird species as possible within a 24 hour period from May 14 – June 19, 2011. To sign-up your team or get more information at [www.sacajaweaaudubon.org](http://www.sacajaweaaudubon.org) or call 406 600-6666. All proceeds benefits Southwestern Montana birds and other wildlife. Early Bird Prize Drawing Register your team by May 2, 2011 to win a Full Conference Registration to Montana Audubon Bird Festival - valued at \$110.



## It Matters Where Development Occurs: Sonoran Institute's Work to Shape the Future of the West

Monday, April 11, 2011

Downstairs Community Room

First Security Bank at 670 South 19th Street  
Bozeman, Montana

Diane Snyder, Northern Rockies Regional Director of the Sonoran Institute, will present a program on the Sonoran Institute's current work in the Northern Rockies Region, and engage the audience in a conversation about the impact of development on avian populations.

The Northern Rockies Region of the Sonoran Institute has been working in Montana's landscapes and communities for the past 13 years, helping protect open space and working with communities to manage growth and change in a way that respects the people and lands of the State.

Diane Snyder grew up in ranching as fourth-generation resident of Wallowa County in the northeastern corner of Oregon. She managed her own herd of cattle for nearly twenty years. Before joining the Sonoran Institute and moving to Bozeman, she worked as the Director of Land Use Planning and Building Department of Wallowa County and as Vice President of Community Development for the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities. She also served on the Oregon State Board of Forestry for six years.

## President's Comments: Common Bird

David Allen Sibley calls the mourning dove "common and widespread." This songbird is indeed common all summer in Montana, where it breeds and where it feeds upon seeds in farmers' fields. "Common" provides us an opportunity to become familiar with the bird.

The subtly colored mourning dove is the slenderist member of the Columbidae family. Its fatter cousin, the rock dove or feral pigeon, genus *Columba*, is a year-round resident in the state. Our *Zenaida macroura* is a distant relative of the African mourning dove. Another dove in the *Zenaida* genus is the white-winged dove, species name *asiatica*. a rare visitor to Montana, with white tips on the wing coverts.

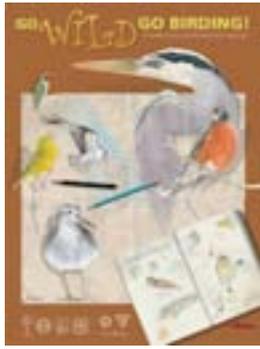
A pair of mourning doves mate for life and share chick-rearing responsibilities. The female sits on eggs during the night, and the male sits on eggs during the day. There are usually two squabs in a brood and up to six broods a year. This prolific breeding supports hunting, and hunters in this country shoot up to 70 million mourning doves annually.

The wings of the mourning dove sometimes make a whistling noise on take off and landing. The coming summer will provide many opportunities to listen for this.

*Anne Millbrooke*

SAS President





## GO WILD, GO BIRDING!

Come join the fun and celebrate the 8th Annual International Migratory Bird Day event with the Yellowstone Ranger District in Livingston! Learn more about our fine-feathered friends through *free* lectures and field trips presented by experts in avian resources. This year's theme "GO WILD, GO BIRDING!"

focuses on reaching out to involve new youth and adults in learning about birds, birdwatching, and bird conservation. Evening lectures tentatively scheduled for May 11; Field trips for May 14, 21, and June 4. For more information and full details, check out the next issue of Sacajawea Audubon News! For more information contact Rachel Feigley, Wildlife Biologist for the Yellowstone Ranger District, at 406-823-6064 or at [rfeigley@fs.fed.us](mailto:rfeigley@fs.fed.us).

### WWF calls for volunteers:

World Wildlife Funds (WWF) Northern Great Plains (NGP) Program [www.worldwildlife.org/what/wherewework/ngp](http://www.worldwildlife.org/what/wherewework/ngp) is seeking enthusiastic volunteers for a unique opportunity to assist in annual counts of Greater sage-grouse, *Centrocercus urophasianus*, displaying on leks (dancing grounds) throughout the month of April on the American Prairie Reserve [www.americanprairie.org](http://www.americanprairie.org) in Phillips County, North Central Montana.

Although some knowledge of sage-grouse behavior and experience attending active sage-grouse leks is an asset, it is not a requirement because a local WWF biologist will provide on-site orientation and training prior to initiating counts. Volunteers will be directed to one or more specific leks to conduct counts, preferably committing to volunteer for a

period of at least three days. Counts will be conducted from 30 minutes before sunrise to two hours after sunrise. Data forms and recording materials will be provided. Volunteers should feel free to explore all that the American Prairie Reserve and the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge have to offer outside of survey hours. Accommodations will not be provided, but volunteers will be directed to two public campsites in the vicinity of the leks and drinking water will be provided. It is hoped that volunteers will have some flexibility in scheduling should rain result in the need to shift scheduled survey dates because roads may become hazardous in the area in wet conditions. Regrettably, volunteers should also recognize that forecasts for extended periods of rain during the survey period may result in cancellation of activities as human safety is of key concern. As a result, volunteers with 4 wheel drive or all wheel drive vehicles will be given preference.

Dennis Jorgensen, Program Officer, with WWF's NGP Program will coordinate volunteer registration and offer the on-site orientation and training. Dennis can be reached at [Dennis.Jorgensen@wwfus.org](mailto:Dennis.Jorgensen@wwfus.org). Initial contact will be via e-mail but once interest has been expressed subsequent communication will include follow-up on the telephone to address any questions regarding this opportunity. In the event of the expression of interest beyond the need for volunteers, we will create a list of volunteers for future participation. Thanks so much to all of you Audubon members for your consideration.

-Dennis Jorgensen  
Program Officer

World Wildlife Fund, Northern Great Plains Program



## Bird Notes

Six **Snow Geese** were seen flying west over Cattail and Davis in Bozeman, March 4<sup>th</sup>, by Madeline Lieb. While these geese were quite early, in just a month's time the majority of the Snow Geese will have passed through Montana on their way to the Arctic.

A large congregation of six **Golden Eagles** was gathered around a carcass near Theisen and Dry Creek roads, February 21<sup>st</sup>. John Czyzewski said they were a mix of both immature and adult birds. On February 20<sup>th</sup>, Mike Myers spotted a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** eating sunflower seed hearts from the feeder. This warbler returned to the feeder off and on over the next five days. Amazingly, this very hardy warbler had survived numerous sub zero days and three months of continuous snow cover. It is a rare occurrence for this species to be seen and presumed to be over wintering, in southwest Montana. Locally there is only one other mid winter record for Yellow-rumped Warbler. On February 23, 2002, Andy Stoltzenberg had a Yellow-rumped Warbler pass through his yard near Mill Creek, in Paradise Valley. Other than these two Yellow-rumped Warblers, there is a 3 1/2 month gap of sightings, from early December till the first of April.

And finally, the first **Mountain Bluebird** of the year was discovered March 9, by Mary Griffith. After several days searching, from Paradise Valley to the Jefferson River, Mary came across a single male bluebird, east of the entrance to Lewis and Clark Caverns.

-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)

## The Hazard of Being Golden

There is that phrase, "Guns don't kill people. People kill people." Well, unfortunately sometimes people also kill eagles with guns. In the last four months, Montana Raptor Conservation Center has admitted two golden eagles with gunshot wounds. Both eagles came from the Glasgow area in northern Montana. The first, (GOEA 135-10) was transported to Havre, where Becky Kean, MRCC Director, picked up the juvenile, female raptor, driving 600 miles round trip to try and help this injured bird. The golden was in poor condition, and had been down for almost a week. The left wing was especially wounded, so Becky focused the x-ray mainly on that wing and her body. The x-ray revealed that 32 pellets and fragments were spread throughout the wing and body, indicating that she had probably been shot at close range. It was extremely disheartening to see such violence directed toward such a majestic bird. Unfortunately, GOEA 135-10 had lost all circulation in that wing, past the elbow. In fact while Becky was cleaning the wounds, she described it as looking like "hamburger." It was incredibly disappointing to know that there was nothing we could do for this young eagle.

GOEA 13-11, the second golden eagle, was transported to Lewistown and then to Melville by amazing volunteers. Again, Becky picked up the eagle and drove her to the raptor center in Bozeman. We immediately did a complete exam and x-ray to discover the

nature of her injury. Two wounds were obvious- one on the far left side of the chest, near the shoulder, and the other near the radius and ulna of the left wing. The radiograph revealed that she had been shot, with the ammunition fragments glowing brightly on the x-ray. Her left ulna was badly fractured. As Becky cleaned the wounds, a few bone fragments from the ulna were found and



removed. Both wound areas were sutured and the wing wrapped. At the writing of this article, the large, female golden returned from surgery at All West Veterinary, where the veterinarian removed more bone fragments and placed a pin in the bone to stabilize it. Her wing will be wrapped for one week, the pin will remain for four weeks, and finally, if the bone heals, she will undergo at least three weeks of physical therapy and reconditioning before being released.

Golden eagles are federally protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Act as well as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. According to the US Fish and Wildlife website,

*"The 1972 amendments increased civil penalties for violating provisions of the Act to a maximum fine of \$5,000 or one year imprisonment with \$10,000 or not more than two years in prison for a second conviction. Felony convictions carry a maximum fine of \$250,000 or two years of imprisonment. The fine doubles for an organization. Rewards are provided for information leading to arrest and conviction for violation of the Act."*

Golden eagles are the largest and most powerful raptors in North America. They have a wingspan of up to 71/2 feet and a gripping strength of about 750 pounds per square inch. To give some perspective, humans have an average gripping strength of 40 pounds per square inch. Golden eagles primarily hunt rabbits, ground squirrels, prairie dogs and other grassland and sage brush mammals, as the open prairie, hills, and mountain regions act as their territory. It is speculated that Golden Eagle populations in the Rocky Mountain west are in decline by 30 to 40% over the last fifteen years, due to habitat loss.

Our mission at the Montana Raptor Conservation Center is to conserve and restore raptors through rehabilitation and release, public education and research. The goal of this story falls under the public education category. Hopefully by raising awareness to others about birds of prey, we will no longer witness the careless treatment of these extraordinary indicator species.

- Cynthia Zyzda

Montana Raptor Conservation Center

## IBA BIRD COUNT OUTINGS

Bird counts are scheduled for the Headwaters State Park IBA (Important Bird Area) and the Madison Valley IBA for April. On Saturday, **April 16**, SAS volunteers will be counting the Spring migratory birds at Headwaters State Park (just north of Three Forks). Annie Sisk will be leading this group. Meeting time is 8 a.m. at Park Headquarters, on the right as you enter the Park. Please join us for this birding trip - and let Annie know by contacting her at 285-6596 or e-mail at [rmr605@hotmail.com](mailto:rmr605@hotmail.com).

On Saturday, **April 30**, SAS volunteers will be meeting at 7:30 a.m. at the Ennis Pharmacy to get ready for a bird count along the Madison River and around Ennis Lake. This should be a very productive outing consisting of waterbirds, raptors, and small land birds. The group will split into two or three groups, with one group venturing on the river by canoe, raft and kayak from Varney north to Ennis. Please join us for this trip, led by Paulette Eppler. She would like to know who's coming so give her a call at 586-0932 or e-mail her at [bigskyepples@msn.com](mailto:bigskyepples@msn.com).





**Sacajawea Audubon Society**  
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**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). Send announcements for upcoming activities to **Jennie Chalet, jenniechalet@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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[mtaudubon@mtaudubon.org](mailto:mtaudubon@mtaudubon.org); [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org) For direct contact:

[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

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Mail your check and application to:

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Attn: Membership

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