



# SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

December 2012

## Calendar at a Glance

Dec 9th	Bird Sightings to John Parker
Dec 10th	SAS Meeting
Dec 15th	Newsletter Submissions Due
Dec 15th-26th	2012 Christmas Bird Count

## Mating For Life

### A Film By Cindy Stillwell

Monday December 10th , 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

Hope Lutheran Church

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

For our last meeting of this calendar year, the Sacajawea Audubon Society welcomes Cindy Stillwell, Associate Professor in the MSU School of Film and Photography, who will present her film *Mating for Life*. Part first person essay, part nature film, this film documents her experience of the spring migration of the Sandhill Cranes. Poetic as well as informative, this film focuses on the questions that arise for humans as they contemplate a bird that mates for life.

A graduate of the University of Georgia Department of Art, Cindy received her bachelors of fine arts in 1991 focusing on photographic design. In 1996, Cindy completed her masters of fine arts at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Cindy's work has screened at venues worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Sundance Film Festival, the Walker Art Center, and the International Film Festival of Rotterdam. To learn more about Cindy and her work visit her website at <http://www.hybridmediafilms.com>.



## 2012 Christmas Bird Count

Come join the fun in one of our area's Christmas Bird Counts. The Christmas counts, started in 1900, are an opportunity for beginning and expert birders to get together and enjoy this holiday tradition.

**Bozeman** Saturday, December 15th

Compiler: John Parker 586-5863

Meet at Perkins Restaurant, 2505 West Main, Bozeman, between 7:00-7:30AM

**West Yellowstone** Sunday, December 16th

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 16th

Compiler: Sally MacDonald 223-9167 or at

[smacbirder@msn.com](mailto:smacbirder@msn.com)

Meet at the Best Western Inn 1515 W Park St (Copper John's) between 7:00-7:30

**Ennis** Wednesday, December 19th

Compiler: Robin Wolcott 406-581-5418

Meet at Yesterday's Café in the Ennis Pharmacy, By 7:30 AM or sooner for breakfast

**Three Forks** Wednesday, 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

For more information, contact the count compilers. Please Contact the area compiler before the count, as this will give them the opportunity to plan and organize the count before the count day. Participation in all counts is free.

## Bird Notes

In last month's newsletter was a mention of a single Blue Jay in Gardiner, October 13<sup>th</sup>. Since then it's been an all out invasion of **Blue Jays** across our area. I've received reports of Blue Jays from nine different locations: October 15<sup>th</sup>, at Bob Sisk's near Sedan; October 19<sup>th</sup>, at Robin Wolcott's in south Bozeman; October 21<sup>st</sup>, at Annie Sisk's in Three Forks; October 23<sup>rd</sup>, at Audrey Evers' near Four Corners; October 24<sup>th</sup>, at Sarah Rittmeyer's near Green Mountain in Bridger Canyon; October 24<sup>th</sup>, at Kirk Horn's near Hebgen Lake; November 2<sup>nd</sup>, at Paulette Epple's in northeast Bozeman; November 2<sup>nd</sup>, at Dorie Green's in west Bozeman; November 3<sup>rd</sup>, at Jennie Holton's northwest of Bozeman. The last time there was a movement of Blue Jays through this area, on this scale, was in the fall of 2004. Several of these jays have lingered at a location for days or weeks. The up coming Christmas Bird Counts should give us an idea whether some of these birds will attempt to over winter, beyond their typical range.



*SAS Member John Mitchel managed to snap this picture of a skittish, but hungry Blue Jay at his home in south Bozeman. A couple of Blue Jays returned to his feeders suspended below three mature Colorado blue spruces about 30 yards from his home. Nearby mature ash, chokecherry, birch, aspen, maple, and*

*cotoneaster makes great cover for many birds who frequently visit John's feeders.*

The early season winter finch numbers seem to possibly indicate a big year. **Common Redpolls** are being reported from numerous locations in our area, and all across Montana. In the mountains surrounding the area valleys, **Pine Grosbeaks** have been noted on a regular basis this fall.

The season's first big storm pushed many birds through the region. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, during the storm Sue Williams reported **Snow Geese, Trumpeter Swans, and Sandhill Cranes** flying over their place near Tom Miner Basin, at the south end of Paradise Valley. Sue said the birds seemed to be confused and trying to find a way out of the storm, as they would fly west and then back to the east. But what fun to hear their distinctive calls from the sky. The next morning as the storm was breaking, Tim Preso was shoveling his drive southwest of Bozeman, when he got to see and hear a large flock of Snow Geese fly pass over the house. Not long before that, when the clouds hadn't started lifting yet, a low flying flock of seven **Tundra Swans** flew through the mist over the neighborhood. What a thrill that must have been.



-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)

## Raptor Transportation

Transportation is a key element in just about all creatures' lives. How does one get from point A to point B? Walk, run, fly, swim, bike, climb, drive. All of these modes of transport have cause and effect, getting us from one place to another, and sometimes we meet each other along the way.

Well, we know that our raptor friends tend to fly because of the amazing engineering of their wings. I know I am a little jealous of that fact. But as with most beings, not all birds of prey are alike in their flight. Different tools for different purposes. The agile accipters, or forest hawks, have long tail feathers acting as a rudder to maneuver quickly through dense trees in pursuit of song birds. Buteos, on the other hand, have broad wings to soar effortlessly over fields in search of rodents. The speedy falcons sport narrower, pointy wings for that quick stoop against prey. The large brutes of the raptor world, the eagles, have large wing spans and broad wings to soar high above. Although turkey vultures have eagle-like wing spans, they weigh

much less than eagles, and so they teeter like a kite in flight. And many owls are stealthy, night hunters. Their wings are specialized to be silent in flight.



As a human, it is incredible to witness the flight fancies of raptors, but unfortunately sometimes our journeys coincide in more unfortunate ways. The most frequent cause of injury that we see at the Raptor Center are birds being hit by vehicles. This accounts for about 45% of all admitted birds of prey. The specific injuries include head and eye trauma, fractures, internal injuries, and abrasions, and the rehabilitation time varies from one week to one year, depending on severity. Like us, birds of prey will

case, it means a trip to the grocery store or a restaurant, but for them, it means feasting on road kill. And because it's "all you can eat," they do, resulting sometimes in the inability to gain lift when they decide to take off.

The circumstance of a raptor being injured is also another reason that our transportation paths cross. Montana is a huge state, so when a bird is hurt far from Bozeman, MRCC relies on the help of volunteers who will transport them at least part of the way. We consider ourselves very lucky to have bird lovers offer their taxi service to birds of prey. So as you ponder your locomotion on the planet and the many ways humans move around, maybe you will consider giving a bird a ride when it is unable to fly. To become a transport volunteer, contact the Montana Raptor Conservation Center at 406-585-1211.

Report an injured raptor quickly!

*Article by Cynthia Zyzda*

*Photo by Becky Kean*

## Montana's Wildlife Needs Your Voice

With the 2013 Montana Legislature starting in January, many important issues impacting wildlife, wildlife habitat, and our environmental are at stake. The passionate and reasoned voices of Auduboners across the state can make such a difference. We anticipate that most of our work at Legislature will be defensive. Our priorities are:

- **Fighting for Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat** by supporting wildlife program budgets—and fighting legislation that prohibits the purchase of any new public land, including for wildlife habitat.
- **Advocating for Climate Change Solutions** by ensuring that Montana's energy development remains as wildlife-friendly as possible—and that the state continues to make progress on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other climate change solutions.
- **Defending our Environmental Laws**, including the Montana Environmental Policy Act (which requires a review of environmental impacts before they developing new mines, large subdivisions, oil and gas wells, timber sales, etc.), land use laws designed to regulate uncontrolled development (from subdivisions to gravel pits), and laws that protect our clean air and water.

Please lend your voice to help Audubon in Helena! You can do this by signing up for our action alert program at your local Audubon Chapter meeting or at [www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org). We limit the use of our action alert program to the most critical times! And if you are not sure if you are signed up, just sign up again—we make sure that duplicate email addresses are weeded out.



**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 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 [newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org).

**Change of Address:** Please notify Sally MacDonald, 223-9167 or [membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org) 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.sacajaweaaudubon.org/>

*Mailing Address*

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**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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\_\_\_\_\_ \$20 First Time Member

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive the chapter newsletter by E-mail only.

Mail your check and application to:  
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 Montana Bird Hotline: 406-721-9799 to report unusual or out-of-season birds

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