



SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

December 2014

Calendar at a Glance

Dec 8th	SAS Meeting	Dec 20th	Bozeman CBC
Dec 14th	W. Yellowstone CBC	Dec 26th	Three Forks CBC
	Livingston CBC	June 5th - 7th	MT Audubon Bird Festival
Dec 17th	Ennis CBC		

Missouri Headwaters State Park

Trident Extension Trail Master Plan Concepts & Phase 1 Site Design Presentation

Monday December 8th, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Hope Lutheran Church

2152 W. Graf Street in Bozeman

Come join us for a special presentation given by Montana State University-Landscape Design Studio students Cornelia Reid, Heather Begger, Jace Kimmet and Scott Samson. For the past three months, as part of their *Sustainable Site Design Service-Learning Project*, these students have been working on a conceptual master plan and phase 1 design for the Missouri Headwaters State Park – Trident Extension Trail in Three Forks, Montana.

This trail will start at the boat-ramp parking lot at Missouri Headwaters State Park and continue eastward onto Holcim US Inc. property towards the old town site of Trident. The trail will parallel the Missouri River and provide excellent viewing of the limestone cliffs where Peregrine Falcons, Prairie Falcons and Great Horned Owls have been found nesting in the past. The trail will also provide opportunities to view water birds, such as Double-crested Cormorants, on the river's gravel bars, and numerous song and grassland birds, such as Lark Sparrow.

Sacajawea Audubon Society has been working collaboratively with Holcim US Inc. and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to create the new trail at Missouri Headwaters State Park. We have been delighted to have had the opportunity to engage Rebekah VanWieren and her Landscape Design Studio students in this initial phase of the project.

Member Pics!



Thanks to Sandy Pittendrigh for this photo submission of a male Roughlegged hawk. As Sandy said "After hovering he folded his wings and dropped like a stone into a snow bank 5' feet from the

North shore of Ennis lake. And then flew off dangling a mouse from his beak. Was quite a sight." Sandy also submitted this great shot of an American White Pelican at Harrison Reservoir this September. Members are always welcome to share their shots! Thanks, Sandy!



Membership Corner

We are in the process of updating our membership records and implementing a new software system. If you have any questions or concerns about your membership information on record, please contact our new membership coordinator, Karin Jennings, at karin.jennings@gmail.com or 587-2279. Also, if you would like to help us reduce our chapter expenses, you may request to receive the newsletter by email only, rather than having a hardcopy printed and mailed to you. Please let Karin know if you wish to make this change.



Christmas Bird Count Season is Here!

Come join the fun on 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.

West Yellowstone

Sunday, December 14th

Compiler: Brad Barth

(406) 640-2628

barth.brad@gmail.com

Meet at the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center, West Yellowstone at 8:30 AM

Livingston

Sunday, December 14th

Compiler: Sally MacDonald

(406) 223-9167

smacbirder@msn.com

Meet at The Other Café, in Livingston between 7:00-7:30 AM

Ennis

Wednesday, December 17th

Compiler: Robin Wolcott

(406) 581-5418

pajaros@wewocotts.com

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

Bozeman

Saturday, December 20th

Compiler: John Parker

(406) 586-5863

conundrumjp@gmail.com

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

Three Forks

Friday, December 26th

Compiler: Tom Forwood

(406) 570-6432

tjfishin75@gmail.com

Meet at Wheat Montana at exit 274 at 8:00 AM or by 7:30 for breakfast



For more information, contact the area 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.



FOR YOUR CALENDAR: *Wings Across the Big Sky*

June 5-7, 2015 Helena, Montana

The time has arrived! ... time to begin planning and spreading the word that **Montana Audubon's Wings Across the Big Sky Festival, co-hosted by Last Chance Audubon Society**, is June 5-7 at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel in Helena. We invite you to spread the news and enthusiasm so we can all enjoy a fantastic turnout. Invite your out-of-state and nearby friends, birders and non-birders alike, to visit the Capital City and surrounding areas where you can participate in abundant festival activities.

Included in this year's activities are close to 20 field trips scheduled each of two days. These include trips into Helena Valley grasslands, wetlands, forest and field, with the anticipation of seeing a varied array of species.

Festival headquarters will be located at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel at 2301 Colonial Drive in Helena. Last Chance Audubon has been working with us and the Colonial team on event logistics and service, and this venue is going to supply us with excellent opportunities to host an expanded display area, concurrent Saturday afternoon presentations, a fun Friday night festival kickoff event hosted by Last Chance Audubon, our keynote speaker (see below), and a Saturday evening banquet dinner.

We are very pleased to announce that Scott Weidensaul will be our keynote speaker this year. He is the author of more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist "Living on the Wind," about bird migration; "Return to Wild America: A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Soul"; and "Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding." His last book, "The First Frontier: The Forgotten History of Struggle, Savagery and Endurance in Early America," was published in 2012, and he is the author of the forthcoming "Peterson Reference Guide to Owls." Weidensaul is a contributing editor for *Audubon Magazine* and writes for a variety of other publications. He lives in the mountains of eastern Pennsylvania, where he studies the migration of hawks, owls and hummingbirds.

Each month we will continue to feature developing news on the 2015 Bird Festival. Stay tuned!

For more information contact Montana Audubon's Bird Festival Coordinator, Cathie Erickson: cerickson@mtaudubon.org.

Bird of the Month -

Northern Shrike

Lanius excubitor

Length: 10" Wingspan: 12" Weight: 2.5 oz.

The Northern Shrike, another songbird that makes its winter home in Montana, is a predatory songbird. They make their living by preying on insects, small mammals and songbirds. Known as "butcher-birds", shrikes impale their prey on thorns or barbed-wire. They also store excess prey this way to eat later. This is a smart adaptation to survive periods of food scarcity. Shrikes have an amazing memory for the location of their stored victims. Their hunting strategy is to sit and wait on a conspicuous perch, then swoop down and seize their prey near or on the ground with their feet or bill. The prey are then carried to a structure where they can either impale or securely wedge it for eating. They kill by biting through the neck. Shrikes are able to carry prey equal to and exceeding their own body weight.



The Northern Shrike is fairly unmistakable in appearance. Adults are medium-sized with gray above and white below, black and white pattern on the wings and a narrow black mask. The tail is relatively long and black with white outer edges. The bill is black, and similar to raptors, toothed and hooked at the tip.

Both the male and female Northern Shrike sing throughout the year, the male especially in late winter and early spring. Their song is a medley of low warbles and harsh, squeaky notes. Their call is a rapid rasping "aak-aak". They are a bird of open country, including shrubby fields and forest edges.

The Latin name for the Northern Shrike, *Lanius excubitor*, means "Butcher watchman".

Sources: Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Abstract of Minutes of Sacajawea Audubon Society Board Meeting, Nov. 3, 2014

Reports of Officers:

Treasurer: Evelyn Acton reported First Security Bank's \$500 sponsorship of the Bridger Raptor Festival. This generous gift was acknowledged with thanks.

Vice-President: Lou Ann Harris announced that Karin Jennings is our new Membership Chair. The Publicity chair is still open. The *Madisonian's* invitation to SAS to contribute an article on winter birding in the Madison Valley was acknowledged. Lou Ann will compose the article. SAS has signed onto a fundraiser entitled "AmazonSmile." When folks shop at smile.amazon.com and choose SAS as their charitable organization, SAS will receive 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases.

Reports of Committee Chairs

Conservation: The Missouri Headwaters State Park Trail Extension project continues as MSU students work on a design to be presented at our December

general meeting. The Bozeman Wetlands project: Vickie Bachus, Chris Nixon, and Tom Hines are contacting an appraiser for a market analysis. Kestrel Nest Box Project: Paulette Epple reported that kestrels successfully used three nest boxes this year. Education: Hillary Johnson has agreed to coordinate this program. Christmas Bird Count Dates: John Parker supplied the following: Livingston - 14 Dec (Sunday.); Ennis - 17 Dec (Wed.); Bozeman - 20 Dec (Sat); Three Forks - 26 Dec ((Friday); West Yellowstone - TBA. Membership: Lou Ann and Karin Jennings are arranging a free trial of Salesforce, a cloud-based software for membership management. Programs: Jackie Wilson welcomed ideas for future presentations. Raptor Festival: The Raptor Festival was a huge success, with the highest attendance ever. Bridger Bowl was__delighted with our involvement and has asked SAS to partner with them in 2015. Raptor Raffle:

Close to 200 raffle tickets have been sold. Website: Our Facebook page now has over 400 likes.

Unfinished Business: Liability Waivers: The pros and cons of these were discussed. No action was taken, but we will look into how other chapters handle them. Conflict of Interest forms. These were passed out by Leo Freeman for Board members to sign.

New Business: PechaKucha. Leo described this media event and suggested that board members consider taking part. Building Youth Participation in SAS: Jeff Safford volunteered to ascertain how Boy and Girl Scouters may blend Birding Merit Badge requirements with SAS.



Our Native Birds

"The native birds are one of our nation's most valuable assets. Destroy them and in a comparatively few years the insects will have multiplied to such an extent that trees will be denuded of their foliage, plants will cease to thrive, and crops cannot be raised"



So wrote Chester A. Reed, artist, naturalist, and photographer in the preface to his Bird Guide; Land Birds East of The Rockies; from Parrots to Bluebirds, copyrighted 1906. I came across the old canvas-bound volume in the back of a little-used drawer in my grandmother's house last summer. Reed was the first to create a field guide on song birds for the general public, and published the first bird watching magazine from 1901-1906.

Reed and Frank M. Chapman from the Worcester Natural History Society believed that educating the public about man's effects on the environment was of paramount importance, but that process was being ignored by governments and businesses. The late 1800's were a time of unhindered devastation of America's forests and wildlife. Bison had been slaughtered for sport and the entire Yellowstone bison population was down to the last 40 animals. Commercial hunting of birds had decimated populations of the Passenger Pigeon and the Eskimo Curlew. The Snowy Egret and other colony nesting birds were brought to the brink of extinction. In May, 1900, with pressure from newly organized Audubon Society chapters in east coast states, Congress passed the **Lacey Act**. This law banned market hunting of wildlife

for commercial sale of food and for the plume trade that flourished in Europe for the making of ladies hats.

There was little enforcement of the Law in the early 20th century. The only deterrent to commercial hunting came from the action of individual States and the US Army (through the Department of the Interior) . The Weeks-McLean Law of 1913 was "designed to stop commercial market hunting and the illegal shipment of migratory birds from one state to another."(USFW- Migratory Bird Program); but it was the Migratory Bird Treaty of 1918, passed under Woodrow Wilson, that put an end to commercial market hunting in the US. The Act decreed that all "migratory birds and their parts (including eggs, nests, and feathers)" were fully protected (USFW). The Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 was without funding until President Franklin Roosevelt passed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act in 1934 (known as the Duck Stamp Act).



Enforcement was still weak throughout most of the early 1900's with individual States creating a fragmented system of wildlife management laws, licensing, and protections. A more effective, unified set of regulations was insured only by the passing of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. That Act provided protection for all endemic birds including management of game species by requiring States to manage and maintain "adequate" population numbers. Through advanced science and best management practices we have, as a nation, improved our management of game species and protection of song birds in the last 50 years. The recent designation of 'Proposed Threatened' for the Greater Sage Grouse is such an example. To see Western state wildlife agencies being proactive by working hard to keep such species of concern off the 'Endangered' list by addressing falling population numbers before they reach the brink is encouraging and sets a good precedent for future wildlife management policy .

Other Federal Laws for Bird protection include:

The Waterfowl Depredation Preventative Act, 1956 (Amended '59), the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1980. (Amended, 1984, '86,'88,'89,'90, and 1992), and the Wild Bird Conservation Act of Oct 1992.

Chester Reed's observations of bird behavior and his use of them to assess the health of our environment were ground breaking in the early 20th century. Birds and indicator wildlife species such as the Grizzly Bear continue to serve as 'Canaries in the Coal Mine' for our environmental health and habitat protection.



Martha W Collins



Bird Notes -

Fall migration is often notable for the rarities that can be found due to prevailing weather patterns and strong storms. These may blow birds off course, or entrain the birds within the storm system. Here in southwestern Montana our very mild fall featured few strong storms, so all and all it was a relatively uneventful season for rare birds, but for a pelagic stray into the interior of the continent and a surprise from the east.



A female **Black Scoter** discovered October 29th, on Cottonwood Reservoir by Paulette Epple, Lou Ann Harris, and John Parker was Montana’s twentieth record for this species. Though hard to find at times because of the wind, waves, and sun glare, this sea duck that is a rare interior migrant was seen by many observers over the course of the following week.

Common in the eastern half of the United States, and generally restricted in Montana to the eastern third of the state, Eastern Bluebirds are an exciting find anywhere west of Billings. So Cheryl Farmer’s discovery of a male **Eastern Bluebird** October 5th, north of Bozeman along Toohey Road, was very notable. This was only the second Eastern Bluebird documented in southwestern Montana, and the first since 1908, when one was seen in Cinnabar Basin, Park County.

During the fourth week of October several large congregations of **Sandhill Cranes** were seen in the Gallatin and Madison Valleys. On October 21st Glenda Barnes saw 100-200 cranes along Buffalo Jump Road in the lower Madison Valley. Daily during this period while traveling to work, Lurah Klass was seeing around 100 cranes along Baxter Lane west of Bozeman. And to the northeast of Belgrade, in the fields off of Hamilton Road, Robin Wolcott was seeing 200 cranes. Possibly the last Sandhill Crane of the season was heard November 7th by Joanne McCartney, as it flew over Gardiner.

Andrew Guttenberg was in the right place at the right time to see an oddly out of place ibis. On November 1st, while stopped at the light at Kagy and Willson in Bozeman, Andrew saw the presumed **White-faced Ibis** fly low over the road. There is only one other Montana record for White-faced Ibis in the month of November. Typically the last ibis are seen early in October.

All through the month of October and into November, two **Blue Jays** had been visiting Mary Griffith’s feeder near Gardner Park in south Bozeman. On the other side of town, two Blue Jays have been frequenting the area north of the Story Hills around Bridger Canyon Drive.

Most years, a scattering of White-throated Sparrows are seen in the Gallatin Valley from mid-September to November. Usually people see one or perhaps two together, so it was quite remarkable when 5 **White-throated Sparrows** visited Paulette Epple’s yard in northeast Bozeman on October 3rd. While doing the Madison Valley IBA survey on October 18th, Katherine Boyk, Dolores Dighans, Adele Pittendrigh, and John Parker found an immature **Harris’s Sparrow** at the Valley Garden fishing access site. Besides seeing the rather uncommon Harris’s Sparrow, what made this sighting really special was that it was seen foraging for seeds in a tight group of sparrows that also included one Song Sparrow, one American Tree Sparrow, and one White-crowned Sparrow.



Donate...Please!

At this time of year when you are swarmed with requests for charitable donations, we hope that you will consider including Sacajawea Audubon Society in your end-of-the-year giving. **Your donations** and your volunteered time are what keep us going. If you would like to help us maintain our mission to build on an interest in birds to promote the conservation of our natural environment through enjoyment, education and action, we would appreciate any contribution you are able to give. You can make a tax-deductible donation by using the enclosed envelope or if you prefer, you may donate online at www.sacajaweaaudubon.org/support-us/

I would like to support the 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 newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

Change of Address: Please notify Karin Jennings at 587-2279 or 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

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Publicity Chair	OPEN		
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Webmaster	Lou Ann Harris	600-3585	louann@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Audubon Adventures	Hillary Johnson		ralphhilary@gmail.com

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ **Zip:** _____

Email: _____

_____ **\$20 First Time Member**

_____ **I would like to receive the chapter newsletter by E-mail only.**

Mail your check and application to:

Sacajawea Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 597711711
(N51)

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