



# SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

February 2013

## Calendar at a Glance

Feb 9th Bird Sightings to John Parker  
Feb 11th SAS Meeting  
Feb 15th Newsletter Submissions Due



*Crested orange eye  
Perching, Colorful, Glossy  
Floating whistler*



## Studying the wolf issue: What science and scientists suggest

**Monday February 11th , 2012 at 7:00 p.m.  
Hope Lutheran Church  
2152 W. Graf Street (off of South 19th) in Bozeman**

Norm Bishop, who has been interpreting wolves and their recovery in the Yellowstone area for 27 years, will briefly review a number of recent studies, many of which were enabled by wolf restoration, that may inform the issue of wolf management in the greater Yellowstone area. He will be open to questions following the talk.

The Sacajawea Audubon Society meets the second Monday of the month (September through May) at 7:00 p.m., at the Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf Street (off of South 19th) in Bozeman. We invite the public to attend our meetings and participate in our field trips.

## Save the Date: The 14th Annual Wings Across the Big Sky Festival

June 7th -- June 9th, 2013

You are invited to join Montana Audubon and Lewistown for dynamic birding field trips, great speakers, interesting presentations, and fun festivities as we celebrate efforts to conserve our birds and wildlife in the heart of Montana. The Lewistown community and surrounding areas are gearing up to welcome birders to the region.

Keynote speaker John Marzluff will share the amazing world of corvid intelligence with us! Visit [mtaudubon.org](http://mtaudubon.org) for more information and a sneak peak at John's work.

Experience Central Montana and all this landscape has to offer either through festival field trips or your own exploration!

- Lewistown Trail System
- Snowies, Moccasins, Belts, Judiths, and Highwoods
- Big Springs Trout Hatchery
- Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge
- Big Spring Creek Fishing
- An official Cornell Lab of Ornithology eBird Trail Tracker, the first and only in the state, will be available in the lobby of the festival hotel, the Yogo Inn, to record your sightings!

## Bird Notes

As is often the case during southwestern Montana winters, there has been a distinct movement of **Northern Goshawks** into the more open valleys from the surrounding mountain forests. On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, Melissa Scott and Eric Rock spotted an immature goshawk along the Sourdough Nature Trail in Bozeman. The next day Brian Thorpe saw an adult goshawk in the Baxter Meadows subdivision. A goshawk perched briefly above Scott Dean's house in Clyde Park December 30<sup>th</sup>. Several Northern Goshawks were seen during the course of the local Christmas bird counts.

While out viewing raptors in the Springhill area December 29<sup>th</sup>, Tim Preso saw a **Prairie Falcon** on a fence post, consuming an unidentified bird. Not only did the falcon eat all the meaty parts, it "then concluded its meal by choking down both legs (claws last) one after the other!"

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, Peter Norlander saw a **Gyr Falcon** fly down Main in Livingston.

While walking on Peet's Hill January 8<sup>th</sup>, Dorie Green saw a **Northern Shrike** perched at the top of a tree.

Matt Reid was very fortunate to spot a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at his feeder in Bozeman, December 27<sup>th</sup>. This is only the fourth local winter record for this area's most common breeding warbler.

The "Taco Bell" **Great-tailed Grackle** was relocated December 30<sup>th</sup>, at the Gallatin Valley Mall, by Robin Wolcott. This Great-tailed Grackle, first discovered last winter, and only the third on record for Montana, had not been seen since early September.

North of Bozeman off of Rocky Mountain Road, David Coffin has consistently had 75-100 **Gray-crowned Rosy Finches** coming to his yard throughout this past December. Along with this flock of finches, there have been 3-5 **Black Rosy Finches**.

-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)

## Results! From the Bozeman Christmas Bird Count

The **Bozeman CBC** was conducted December 15<sup>th</sup>, with early morning snow, then clearing with mostly sunny skies in the afternoon. Along with being a great day to be out looking for birds, statistically the count was amazing. The previous high species count for Bozeman was 59. This year 70 species were seen, plus two count week species.

New to the count were a single Pied-billed Grebe, and a count week Ring-necked Duck. Birds that were seen, that had only been recorded one time before included: Canvasback (cw), Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Northern Saw-whet Owl (last recorded 1915), and Spotted Towhee.

Overall, there were record high counts for 23 species (including 6 species of raptors and both crossbill species), with several more species just missing new high counts. The total of 14,581 individual birds was also a new high total.

Temperatures near zero didn't slow down the 18 volunteers that participated in this year's **Ennis CBC** on Wednesday Dec 19, 2012. But it did keep some of us in the vehicles a bit more! The participants came from Ennis and the Madison Valley, Livingston, Deer Lodge, and Bozeman.

Overall there were 56 species on count day, with an additional 6 species during count week when the weather was a bit milder. Highlights on the count included 2 Blue Jays, a White-throated Sparrow, 35 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches and 705 Common Redpolls – over two times the previous high count! Amazingly no American Robins were found, a frequent flyer for this count and numbering 265 last year.

The participants on the **Three Forks CBC** on December 26<sup>th</sup> had a seasonable winter day with temperatures ranging from the mid teens to the mid twenties.

Like the Ennis count, a total of 56 species of birds were seen on count day. That total included one new species for the count, a Ferruginous Hawk that was on a center pivot near Willow Creek. Unusual birds on the count included Steller's Jay, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Marsh Wren, all of which were seen for only the third time on the count.

There were new high counts for nine species. The 416 Eurasian Collared-Doves nearly doubled the old high, and the 563 Common Redpolls were more than three times the previous high count. The new high total of 17,069 individual birds was mostly attributable to a massive flock of over 10,000 Horned Larks.

## Success Means Setting Them Free

It is such a privilege to rehabilitate injured birds of prey, and to get an up-close view of these magnificent birds. Humans are only human, and we tend to become attached to animals easily, but at Montana Raptor Conservation Center we have an important task of remembering that our success is dependent upon healing and releasing birds of prey- keeping them wild to do their jobs in the environment.

Many unusual factors go into rehabilitating a raptor. A broken wing on a raptor is a much different scenario than a broken arm on a human. Most obviously, we don't use our arms to fly. Flying for birds of prey is as second nature to them as walking is to us. It is their mode of transportation and a means of hunting for survival. They must have working wings to function. The first stage of treatment is a physical exam, where the examiner uses vision and touch to help determine the injury. Blood is an obvious indicator of the source, along with bruising, but sometimes with a broken wing, there is no blood. Fingers follow the major bones of the wings, feeling for the

swelling and inconsistency of a broken bone.

After the initial exam is complete, an x-ray is taken. This is no small feat and quite stressful for a wild bird.



Staff and volunteers move quickly and quietly to reduce such stress, and in minutes the image is developed and the break pinpointed. Raptors have hollow bones, making them very light weight indeed, so they are no match for a collision with a vehicle. In the best possible situation, the break is

in the mid-shaft of a bone and is fresh. Breaks near the shoulder or elbow are on the other end of the spectrum. Those joints are essential for a functioning wing.

Treatment consists of either wrapping the wing to set the bone back in place or surgery, where a pin is inserted into the bone for correct alignment. The pin is removed weeks later, when the bone is back together. Some broken wings can take from one month to several months to heal, and then the process of physical therapy and exercise begins to help ensure a successful release as well as a productive life for that bird.

While being able to experience raptors up close is truly incredible, the very best part of what we do at MRCC is the day we bid them farewell by releasing them!

Report an injured raptor quickly!  
(406)585-1211

*Article by Cynthia Zyzda*

*Photo by Becky Kean*

## 2013 Montana State Legislature

A few highlights:

- **Montana Habitat.** Several bills will make it difficult for MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks to purchase any more wildlife habitat. This will impact Habitat Montana, FWP's biggest land program, as well as programs that acquire fishing access sites, park lands, and more.
- **Predators: Threatened or Threatening?** In the early 1900's, predators (wolves, mountain lions, black bear, grizzly bear) were significantly reduced in numbers or eliminated around Montana. Numerous bills would again decimate predator populations—sending us back 100 years.
- **Habitat and Land Use.** Land use planning helps local governments understand the impacts of subdivisions and other developments on wildlife and habitat. Numerous bills have been introduced that will restrict local planning efforts, making it more difficult to protect wildlife habitat faced with development.
- **Energy.** There are also many discussions about renewable energy standards and energy efficiency programs. And even a couple good energy bills!

To learn more and get involved visit: [leg.mt.gov](http://leg.mt.gov)!



**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 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@sacajaweaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@sacajaweaudubon.org).

**Change of Address:** Please notify Sally MacDonald, 223-9167 or [membership@sacajaweaudubon.org](mailto:membership@sacajaweaudubon.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.sacajaweaudubon.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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\_\_\_\_\_ 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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