

# SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

## Calendar at a Glance

Sept 1st - Nov 5th	Bridger Raptor Count
Nov 8th	Project Birdfeeder Start
Nov 9th	Bird Sightings Due to John
Nov 10th	SAS Meeting
	Raptor Festival Raffle
Dec 12th	MT Audubon Wildlife Grants Due

## Special Thank you to First Security Bank and Jeff Safford

A special thank you to volunteer Jeff Safford for his successful solicitation of First Security Bank as sponsor of the Raptor Festival keynote speaker Peter Sherrington. Founder & Research Director of the Rocky Mountain Eagle Research Foundation, Peter spoke about the golden eagle migration in the Alberta Rockies.



## Eyes on the Skies: Results of the 24th Bridger Raptor Migration Count

Monday November 10th , 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Hope Lutheran Church  
2152 W. Graf Street in Bozeman

Thanks to the generous support of Sacajawea Audubon Society and others, September 1<sup>st</sup> marked the start of the 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive season of raptor migration research along the crest of the Bridger Mountains. Montana Audubon, in partnership with HawkWatch International (HWI), has coordinated this scientific project for the past 6 seasons. HWI initiated these annual counts in 1991.

These majestic birds use the energy-saving updrafts created by strong winds along the crest of the Bridgers to migrate south. The long-term data collected at the Bridger site helps scientists learn about regional and continental raptor population trends. Most importantly, the Bridger project is designed to monitor widespread environmental changes, using these apex predators as valuable barometers of ecological health.

The Bridger Ridge provides viewing of the largest Golden Eagle migration known in the lower 48 states. Data obtained over the last 24 years has provided scientists with valuable information about trends in raptor populations. Bret and Mikaela will show lots of amazing photos of raptors while summarizing the latest project findings. They will also share many memorable experiences while scanning for migrating raptors atop of Bridger Bowl for more than two months!

Funding for the 2014 Bridger count was provided by the USDA Forest Service (Gallatin National Forest), Sacajawea Audubon Society, Bridger Bowl Ski Area, and NaturEner USA.

## Bridger Raptor Festival Raffle!

Be one of 2 winners of a 2014/2015 Bridger Bowl Season Pass (value of \$699). Sacajawea Audubon and Montana Audubon are raffling off two Bridger Bowl ski passes. The proceeds support the Bridger Mountains Raptor Count, which features the largest known concentration of fall migrating Golden Eagles in the lower 48.

Raffle tickets are \$10 each or 6 for \$50. The drawing will be held Nov. 10, 2014 at the Sacajawea Audubon monthly program, which begins at 7 p.m. at Hope Lutheran Church.

To purchase a raffle ticket and help support this important research project in our own backyard, email: [raptorraffle@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:raptorraffle@sacajaweaaudubon.org).

## Project FeederWatch:

### Let your birds stand up and be counted!

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders starting on November 8<sup>th</sup>. You can count birds on 2 consecutive days every week or on 2 consecutive days a few times a winter. While some FeederWatchers see amazing birds, a wide variety of species, or large numbers of birds, most FeederWatchers see low numbers of what might be characterized as "predictable" birds. *These counts are the heart of FeederWatch.* The FeederWatch data is used to track broad scale movements of winter birds and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. To participate go to [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) and sign up for, or renew, an account. There is a small fee for participating.

- Then: 1.) Put up feeders  
2.) Count the birds that come to visit  
3.) Send in your data

Project FeederWatch is a joint project of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

## Skiing with the Raptors

The 18th annual Raptor Festival at Bridger Bowl was an outstanding success this year due in large part to SAS's larger role. THANK YOU to the lead team at Bridger Bowl (Doug Wales, Emily Lind & Erin O'Connor), the sponsors (Imerys Talc, Northwestern Energy, Community Works, Natural Exposures, & First Security Bank), co-hosts (Bridger Bowl, The Bridger Bowl Foundation, Gallatin National Forest, Montana Raptor Conservation Center, Montana Audubon Society, and Sacajawea Audubon Society), as well as the numerous volunteers and presenters. No doubt the beautiful fall weather October 3 - 5 was a major contributor!

The Bridger Raptor Festival is an annual celebration of the fall migration of raptors through the Bridger Mountains. While the flyway was first discovered in 1979, the Bridger Mountains monitoring station at the Bridger Bowl helicopter platform became the base for the first and subsequent counts in 1991. Seventeen raptor species have been counted regularly using the Bridger Mountain flyway, most notably the golden eagles, with over 1,100 counted in the 2013 fall migration.

Over 4,500 attendees joined in the celebration and activities.

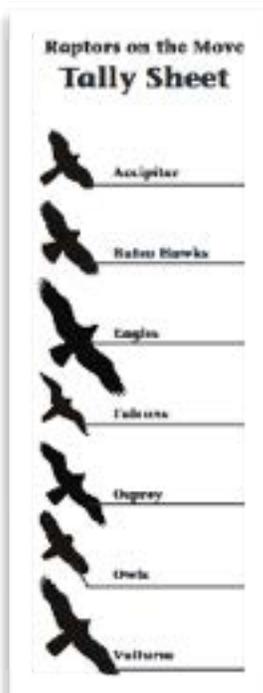
The Festival kicked off Friday evening at the MOR with the Keynote by Peter Sherrington, Founder & Research Director of the Rocky Mountain Eagle Research Foundation speaking about golden eagle migration in the Alberta Rockies. Highlites included presentations provided by Steve Hoffman (ED, MT Audubon) on Raptor Identification, Small Falcons of Helena (merlins) by Dan Ellison, as well as Sketch-a-Bird, Build a Nifty Nest Box & Binocular Target Blitz programs let by Jackie Wilson, Paulette Epple, and Loreene Reid. A special thank you goes out to Loren Acton for preparation of the Nifty Nest Box kits. The entire Schedule of Events can be viewed at [bridgerraptorfest.org](http://bridgerraptorfest.org).



If you didn't make it this year pencil the 2015 Raptor Festival into your calendar for the first weekend in October.

Raffle tickets for Bridger Bowl 2014-15 Season Ski Passes (donated by Bridger Bowl) are still available, and will be

through November 10. The two winners names will be drawn at the November SAS program meeting at 7:00 pm, at Hope Lutheran Church. The evening's program will include a presentation of the results of this fall's raptor migration count. Proceeds of the sale of the raffle tickets will directly fund the cost of the annual raptor migration count.



### 2014 Bridger Raptor Migration Project Update

After 45 days of counting (through October 15<sup>th</sup>) a few highlights may be of interest to Auduboners. Thus far Bret and Mikaela have recorded a total of 2,081 migrating raptors (28% above last year's total for the same date). A spate of fair weather during the first half of October has likely contributed to above-average counts for several species during the past two weeks. More than 800 Golden Eagles have been tallied so far, suggesting improved numbers for this species compared to the past two seasons. Bret & Mikaela have also documented remarkable increases in American Kestrels (135), Northern Harriers (76), Northern Goshawks (30), and Red-tailed Hawks (199). Only Peregrine Falcons (23) and Broad-winged Hawks (22) are down from last year. The Bridger count continues daily through November 5<sup>th</sup>.

*Come join us!*

## Bird of the Month

Bird of the Month –  
Rough-legged Hawk  
*Buteo lagopus*

Length: 20" Wing Span: 53" Weight: 25-49 oz.

As fall progresses into early winter, Gallatin Valley residents will begin to see a familiar winter resident. The Rough-legged Hawk is a true arctic species and breeds in the far north of both the Old World and New World. They prefer open country, primarily boreal forest and open tundra and build a bulky stick nest near the top of a cliff or outcrop. Caribou bones have sometimes been found as nest material. In mid to late September, these hawks begin migrating south and many begin to arrive around Bozeman in late October and early November. The Gallatin Valley is the Rough-legged's winter "Riviera", with abundant small mammals to eat and relatively moderate temperatures and snowfall (as compared with the Arctic).

They are a large hawk, similar in size to a Red-tail Hawk. On a perched bird, look for a dark "mascara" line through the eye, pale streaked chest and broad dark belly. For a bird in flight, look for long and broad wings with black marks underneath at the wrist. If you see a large hawk hovering in flight, it's probably a Rough-legged Hawk. This is often how they hunt for prey. The name "Rough-legged" Hawk comes from their leg feathers which reach all the way down to their toes.



### MY EIGHT BY FORTY MIRADOR

*I married a man who watches birds.  
Before he ever focused on me came Christmas  
bird counts, Each specie an aggregate  
number on a list. The song sparrow equal  
to the great horned owl, the peregrine falcon  
to the red breasted nut hatch. Always the next bird  
coveted more than the former. While I watch so variously.  
Bright feathers do make a difference  
not affecting flight but engaging my fancy.  
In reverie I'm reincarnated as a belted kingfisher.  
The female of this specie also striking in blue  
and orange, some dazzling white and a bit  
of craziness in the punk style head feathers.  
In the lens of my Mirador, the palette of bird  
life slows down the shutter speed of my eyes.  
Who can sight a summer tanager and not delay?  
Surely the honey locusts here in the sun-blasted  
southwest stir when a lucy's warbler blossoms  
on one of its limbs. For my husband the next bird sighted  
might add to his 600. This lister-watcher  
I decide, operates so much like the male species.  
And then he undercuts my brassy assumption  
when I inquire of him what raptor he'd like  
to someday be. Surprise, "a black-capped chickadee."*

*June B. Safford*





## Wildlife Grants Available—Apply Today

Montana Audubon is offering small grants (\$500 maximum/\$1,700 total) for wildlife research and education projects, with an emphasis on nongame wildlife. Grants come from our Audubon Wildlife Fund of Montana endowment. The funds can be used for mileage, equipment, printing, and communications; the funds cannot be used for salaries, stipends, and personal equipment. In 2014, grants purchased equipment for research and education projects at Salish Kootenai College, helped fund a research project on Montana's vulnerable wetlands, and aided a Northern Hawk Owl study in western Montana.

To apply for an Audubon Wildlife Fund grant, visit our website (<http://www.mtaudubon.org/about/grants.html>). Applications must be emailed (preferred) or post marked by Friday, December 12, 2014. Grant recipients will be announced by February 1, 2015.

## Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo Receives Federal Protection under the Endangered Species Act

*Sacramento* – The western population of the yellow-billed cuckoo will be protected as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today. The Service determined that listing a distinct population segment (DPS) of the bird in portions of 12 western states, Canada and Mexico is warranted. In the U.S., the DPS will cover parts of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

The western population of the yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), an insect-eating bird found in riparian woodland habitats, winters in South America and breeds in western North America. Once abundant in the western United States, populations have declined for several decades, primarily due to the severe loss, degradation and fragmentation of its riparian habitat as a result of conversion to agriculture, dam construction, river flow management and riverbank protection. Overgrazing and invasive exotic plants have also contributed to declines.

“While the major threat to yellow-billed cuckoos has been loss of riverside habitat, we do not anticipate any significant new water-related requirements as a result of



this listing decision,” said Ren Lohofener, Director of the Service’s Pacific Southwest Region. “The water resource requirements for riparian habitat are not unique to cuckoos, and in many cases are already being implemented for other species. Riparian restoration efforts go hand-in-hand with good land management, especially management that promotes good livestock grazing practices.”

The Service’s final listing rule, which will be published in tomorrow’s *Federal Register* and become effective November 3, 2014, is based on a thorough review of the best scientific and commercial information available, obtained through exhaustive research, public comments and independent scientific peer reviews.

Next steps include designation of critical habitat for the species and development of a recovery plan. Both steps will be strengthened by participation from other federal and state agencies, tribal entities and the public in the open comment periods.

More information, including the listing rule, is at: [http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/outreach/Public-Advisories/WesternYellow-BilledCuckoo/outreach\\_PA\\_Western-Yellow-Billed-Cuckoo.htm](http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/outreach/Public-Advisories/WesternYellow-BilledCuckoo/outreach_PA_Western-Yellow-Billed-Cuckoo.htm)

Abstract of SAS Board Meeting MinutesOctober 6, 2014

Reports of Officers: Loreene Reid, President, announced that vacancies now exist for chairs in Publicity, Membership, and Education. National Audubon's recent report on climate change and its affect on birds has been made public. MT Audubon is encouraging local chapters to become more active in this issue.

Treasurer: Evelyn Acton gave her monthly rundown on balances. SAS recently received \$685.19 from Montana Audubon as our share in the profits from the Montana Bird Festival, held here in Bozeman in early June.

Reports of Chairs. Conservation. Madison Valley IBA survey, October 18th. Story Mill Community Park. Lot's of community enthusiasm for the park, wildlife viewing opportunities, bird walks, nature interpretation, and classes. The biggest concern voiced at the Master Planning Workshop for the park was the effect of dog use on wildlife. Missouri Headwaters State Park Extension Trail. An M.O.U. designed by Vickie Backus has been signed with the MSU Landscape Design Studio. A meeting will be held with involved students and participants on October 14th. Ruby River Restoration Project. Vickie has assisted the Miller family in preparing a Together Green Grant proposal. Grant awards have not been made public as of this date.

Education: The Bridger Raptor Festival had record-setting attendance, and the educational activities SAS provided were all enthusiastically received and participated in. Leo Freeman will arrange a post-festival follow-up meeting with Bridger Bowl to assess our participation in the event. Audubon Adventures. Hillary Johnson will approach teachers with this opportunity in November.

Field Trips: The Ennis Lake Fall Waterfowl Field Trip is scheduled for October 25th.

Unfinished Business. SAS now has liability insurance coverage. Leo Freeman will compose liability waiver forms for use on our field trips and activities. Leo will also distribute "conflict of Interest" forms for SAS board members to sign.

Board of Directors and Annual Planning SessionAugust 16, 2014

Reports of Officers: President Loreene Reid cited the need for SAS members to serve on the Education Committee and to help with membership development. The the Audit Committee noted the audit review procedure and plan to complete the review of last year's finances by our November meeting. Paulette Epple and Lou Ann Harris are working on the Annual Report to National Audubon, due in November. Loreene urged the need for a Calendar in connection with our Annual Plan.

Reports of Chairs: Conservation: Vickie Backus, Chair. Reports were made for: IBAs; The Story Mill Community Park; the Missouri Headwaters State Park Extension; the Bozeman Wetlands; the Ruby River meander project; Burdock removal; the Regional Conservation Partnership Program; The Yellowstone Ranch Preserve (Hebgen Lake), and the Bridger Ridge Raptor Survey. SAS members who desire elaboration on these projects are invited to request same at the next regular meeting, Monday, November 10th.

Education: SAS has signed an M.O.U. with Bridger Bowl and Montana Audubon to provide the Raptor Fest with educational activities, educational programming, assistance with procuring sponsors, and fixing and/or replacing trail signs. Other discussion concerned Audubon Adventures, Educational classes, and the Habitat Conservation Educational Project.

Field Trips and Bird Sightings. John Parker, Chair, outlined the Fall Field trip schedule.

Programs: Jackie Wilson, chair, discussed Fall general meeting program plans.

Website/Social Media: Lou Ann Harris, chair, keeps our website current and maintains our Facebook page and Twitter account. Send info and photos to her for posting.

Membership Records: \$500 was committed for new software to maintain our membership records.

Birdathon: Loreene Reid. Volunteers are needed to serve on the birdathon committee and to coordinate the event for next year.

Newsletter: Mary Cloud Ammons, Chair. Allegra (formerly Insty Print) is our printer, and will also do the mailing. This will better streamline the process at no extra cost.

Publicity: Karen Ehlert, Chair. Please get pertinent information to Karen for inclusion in "Get Out," *Outside Bozeman*, and other publications.

Montana Audubon Report. Steve Hoffman, Executive Director of Montana Audubon, congratulated SAS for hosting the best and most successful festival ever. Montana Audubon proposes to increase funding for the Billings Audubon Center.

Unfinished Business. Leo Freeman presented a one-page Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Disclaimer of Activities. This document has been favorably reviewed by legal counsel. All participants in field trips, classes, and other activities will be obliged to sign this document. Leo's proposal that SAS purchase liability insurance was also discussed and approved.

New Business: The proposed annual budget for 2015 was presented. The figure of \$18,605 was discussed at length and approved unanimously.





**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@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*

**SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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Membership Records	<b>OPEN</b>		
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Chapter Rep. to State	Sharon Hanton	586-9500	
Webmaster	Lou Ann Harris	600-3585	<a href="mailto:louann@sacajaweaudubon.org">louann@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>

**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](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

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