



SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

February 2012

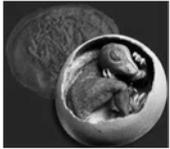
Calendar at a Glance

Feb 13th	February SAS Meeting
Feb 17th-20th	Great Backyard Bird Count
March 9th	Bird Sightings to John Parker
June 8th-10th	Wings Across the Sky Bird Festival

GET INVOLVED in the Great Backyard Bird Count 2012

Every February, bird lovers of all ages join forces in Audubon and Cornell Lab's Great Backyard Bird Count. Learn how to participate in 5 easy steps from Zach Slavin in Audubon's Education & Nature Centers program at: <http://birds.audubon.org/got-birds-get-ready-count>

Hint: you can even participate in your pajamas.



Dinosaur Eggs and Origins of Avian Reproduction

Monday February 13th, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

Hope Lutheran Church

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

Paleontologist David Varrichio will speak on "Dinosaur Eggs and Origins of Avian Reproduction" at the Sacajawea Audubon Society's meeting on February 13th. Dinosaur eggs come in an amazing variety of shapes, sizes, and arrangements. They show strange surface textures and unusual internal structures. The richest dinosaur egg deposits are from China but dinosaur eggs are now known from around the world. Unfortunately, most eggs remain unidentified to a specific dinosaur. Nevertheless, by studying eggs in the field and through careful laboratory work, scientists have come to understand nesting behavior in a few dinosaurs. Many reproductive features that distinguish birds among living animals had their evolutionary origins in carnivorous dinosaurs like Troodon. Recent studies suggest an unexpected system of parental care in Troodon and perhaps even the first birds.

David Varrichio is a professor of paleontology at Montana State University. In college he studied both geology and paleontology. Working with Jack Horner, he earned his doctorate at Montana State University. His research combines geologic fieldwork with anatomy to address questions on dinosaur paleobiology. Ongoing work includes reproduction in theropod dinosaurs and its significance for bird evolution, burrowing in small herbivorous dinosaurs, and dinosaur social behavior. He has participated in fieldwork in the Sahara, Argentina, Inner Mongolia, Yunnan and throughout the American West.

President's Comments: Power Lines

Birds have difficulty seeing power lines and more difficulty in darkness, in poor weather, and in flight from possible danger. This is true of low distribution lines as well as high transmission lines.

A collision with a power line may kill a bird by impact, electrocution, or crippling and soon fatal injury. Collision-susceptible species are generally large and heavy birds (like cranes and raptors), night migrating birds (including many songbirds), and fast-flying birds (like those fleeing possible danger). Some birds (like diurnal hawks) have small binocular fields and large blind areas may include the lines.

Marking wires and insulators have proven successful in significantly reducing collisions. Burying lines totally eliminates the problem. Covering exposed connections with insulation, increasing the distance between the wires so the birds cannot make a connection between lines or between a line and ground, and reducing the vertical spread of lines also have proven to reduce the number of collisions.

To identify conflict hotspots, scientists use data from Important Bird Areas as well as other information. Thanks to our many volunteers who help count birds at our IBAs and thereby contribute to the databases that may help influence the location and construction of power lines.



Anne Millbrooke

**President
Sacajawea Audubon Society**

Sightings from the Christmas Bird Counts

Thank you to all of the participants in this winter's Christmas bird counts, and those who helped make this a memorable series of counts. This year all of the counts were very well attended, and all of those who participated were able to enjoy very mild conditions. All of the local counts were conducted with temperatures in the thirties, or even in the forties, with little wind. The big news on the counts this year was the number and variety of new bird species added to the cumulative count totals.

For the third year in a row the Bozeman counters tallied 59 species, which equals the highest species total. There were a record 13,973 individual birds seen of the count, largely due to high numbers of Canada Goose and Bohemian Waxwings. Three new species, **Snow Goose**, **Ross' Goose**, and **Hermit Thrush**, were seen on count day. The Ross' Goose is a first winter record for southwest Montana. It was only the second time on the Bozeman count that **American Coot** and **Marsh Wren** have been counted, and both species had new high individual counts of 5 and 4, respectively. In all there were new high totals for 12 species. Due to the most comprehensive coverage ever of the trails in the foothills, several common birds (Ruffed Grouse-5, Mountain Chickadee-191, Red-

breasted Nuthatch-99, and Townsend's Solitaire-234) had new high count totals.

The Ennis count had an amazing species total of 73, shattering last year's record of 61 species. A combination of a well attended count, excellent circle coverage, and mild weather all contributed in achieving such a remarkable total. New birds seen on the count included **Virginia Rail**, **Barn Owl**, **Three-toed Woodpecker**, and **Gray Catbird**. The most unusual bird on any of the counts was the Barn Owl, which is rarely seen anywhere in Montana, and a first for the southwestern part of the state. Some of the other notable birds found within the Ennis circle were **Ferruginous Hawk**, **Marsh Wren**, and **Western Meadowlark**.

On the Three Forks count 59 species of birds were documented, including two that were new additions. A very cooperative **Sora** found at the Blackbird fishing access was a first, and surprisingly, **American Dipper** had never been found on the Three Forks count before this year. Both **Canyon Wren** and **Marsh Wren** were seen or heard for only the second time on the count. The Canyon Wrens were heard at both Headwaters State Park and Logan.

-John Parker

2012 Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival Friday Pre-Festival Workshops

Conservation

Northwestern Montana Birds and Wildlife in a Warming World. We'll tour local forests and, hopefully, Glacier National Park. Participants will get up close and personal with the flora and fauna of the area, discuss the impacts of our changing climate, and delve into how we can lessen the impact by reducing carbon pollution and building resilient ecological systems best able to adapt to a changing climate.

Limited to 20 participants

Lunch: included

Time: tentative, 8 A.M. – 2 P.M.

Cost: TBD

River-to-Lakes Initiative. Since 2000, the River-to-Lake Initiative has been providing conservation and restoration expertise to private landowners along the Flathead River and along the North Shore of Flathead Lake. River-to-Lake partners, spearheaded by the Flathead Land Trust, work directly with landowners to craft conservation efforts that meet their needs. We'll meet many of these partners and visit several project sites, including two Important Bird Areas (Owen Sowerwine Natural Area and North Shore Flathead Lake).

Limited to 20 participants

Lunch: included

Time: tentative, 8 A.M. – 2 P.M.

Cost: TBD

Education

Develop a Bird Education Program in your Community. This six-hour training is for any Audubon Chapter member looking to begin or improve their bird education programs within their community. Each participant will receive training and curricula-oriented materials from Flying Wild, a Council for Environmental Education program which introduces students to bird conservation through standards-based classroom activities and environmental stewardship projects. In addition, instructors will share their expertise and experiences in developing new environmental education programs for all ages. (For more information on Project Flying Wild go to www.flyingwild.org.) This workshop will be presented by the Montana Audubon Conservation Education Center: Darcie Vallant, Center Director, and Heather Ristow, Education Director. For questions on this training please contact Darcie at 406-294-5099, ext. 302.

Limited to 30 participants

Time: TBD

Cost: \$25/per individual

For more information about the festival please contact: Montana Audubon Bird Festival Coordinator, Larissa Berry at lberry@mtaudubon.org/406-443-3949, or any Flathead Audubon Board Member. For updates, visit <http://www.mtaudubon.org/birdwatching/festival.html> and "like" us at <http://www.facebook.com/MontanaAudubon>.

A Gift



Raptor rehabilitation is an incredibly rewarding endeavor, but sometimes it can be discouraging- when you lose a patient, when you realize that most of the injuries are

caused by human activity (sometimes ignorant or malicious activity), when you notice that the grants and donations have waivered due to the economy. And then there are those days when a caring community member turns the tables on that discouragement and reminds you of the passion and purpose of conserving birds of prey. One such instance happened recently.

The phone rang at the raptor center in early afternoon. A woman was on the line, and said that the vehicle in which she was travelling with her friends had hit a golden eagle. Well, technically, the golden was coming off of a dead deer and hit the side of the vehicle. I was given excellent directions to the site south of Livingston, off Mill Creek Road. I grabbed an animal carrier, gloves and a towel, and made my way to the area.

When I arrived, the woman driving the vehicle that the golden had hit was waiting for me. She was visibly upset by the occurrence and felt just awful. I tried to reassure her that there is not much you can do when the bird runs into you. You see, sometimes when birds of prey feed off of carcasses, they ingest quite a bit, and are not able to get lift easily. After all, who passes up a free meal?

I grabbed the gloves and towel, and we searched the area for about an hour, under trees, in tall grasses, high and low. There was no sign of the eagle. Luckily her car was not traveling very fast at the time the bird collided, so it is very possible that he was able to fly off with probably a bit of a headache. This was really the best case scenario.

It was so encouraging that this woman cared enough to meet me at the site, help in the search, and feel so profoundly connected to her surroundings to appreciate the role of the golden eagle in our environment. I shared some stories with her of the incredible toughness of these flying predators to ease her worries of the events of the day, and how the staff and volunteers at Montana Raptor

Conservation Center have frequently been awed by their healing abilities. It was at that moment that she surprised me further with a generous donation to the raptor center. I was overwhelmed by her kindness. So, not only do the birds



of prey make rehabilitation rewarding, but the connections we make with thoughtful people in Montana, who respect our raptor neighbors provides the steam to the little rehabilitation engine- that- could to continue conserving birds of prey for the future. Report an injured raptor quickly! (406) 585-1211

Article by Cynthia Zyzda
Photos by Becky Kean

Bird Notes:

There were a few locally unusual birds that missed being found on the various Christmas counts. For over a week in early December, a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was roosting in Annie Woodward's chicken coop, in north Bozeman. Apparently this diminutive owl was preying on the mice that were attracted by the chicken feed.



On a trip to Yellowstone Park January 7th, Martha and Hobart Collins saw a **Pileated Woodpecker**. Shortly after entering the North Gate in the Gardiner River Canyon, the woodpecker flew right in front of their car, and then landed in a tree on the side of the canyon.

The **Spotted Towhee** that had visited Mary Keck's feeder early in December, returned for one day on Christmas Eve.

-John Parker

Thank you to all our sharp-eyed birders for reporting your great sightings. Please report your Bird Sightings by the 9th of the month to John Parker at 586-5863 or conundrum@imt.net

Lodging Option for the 2012 MT Bird Festival

Come join us for Montana Audubon's Annual Bird Festival, this year co-hosted by the Flathead Audubon Society, June 8-10, 2012, at the **Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center**, 1840 US Hwy 93 S in Kalispell. We are very excited about this new facility, which will be center stage for festival activities Friday through Sunday, including registration, birding field trips departure point, guest speaker presentations, meals, banquet festivities, and much more.

The Hilton is centrally located in the heart of the Flathead Valley and provides easy access to all our birding activities, field trips, and workshops, and is within a short drive of abundant recreational destinations, such as Flathead Lake and Glacier National Park.

Currently we have 50 rooms blocked out for festival-goers Friday and Saturday nights. (25 King beds and 25 Queen/Queen beds at \$99 per night plus applicable taxes.) This rate will be extended to us for three days prior and post event. Be sure to tell them you're with the Bird Festival group to get the special rate! We suggest you make your reservations soon at the hotel directly at 1-406-756-4500.

-Larissa Berry, MT Audubon



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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 mcammons@gmail.com.

Change of Address: Please notify **Sally MacDonald, 222-5752** or 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; www.mtaudubon.org For direct contact:

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

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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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Attn: Membership

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