



SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

April 2012

Calendar at a Glance

| | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| April 9th | March SAS Meeting |
| April 14th | Headwaters IBA |
| May 12th | International Migratory Bird Day |
| June 8th-10th | Wings Across the Sky Bird Festival |



9th Annual International Migratory Bird Day event held in Livingston! The official IMBD date is Saturday, May 12! There will be a series of field trips and evening lectures on May 9. This year's theme is "Connecting People to Bird Conservation". The theme focuses on how to motivate people to take actions to help birds. (see poster at left). For more information contact: Rachel Feigley at 406-823-6064 or at rfeigley@fs.fed.us

Birding The Gambia

Monday April 9th, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
 Hope Lutheran Church
 2152 W. Graf Street (off of South 19th) in Bozeman

Twelve intrepid Montana birders traveled to The Gambia for two weeks of amazing birding in October 2011. Ron & Cheryl Farmer will present commentary and slides from the trip as the Audubon program for Monday April 9, 2012. A small African country, The Gambia is a long narrow strip of land following the river Gambia. Surrounded on three sides Senegal, The Gambia has savanna, small forests, inland wetlands, and coastal wetlands that attract over 500 species of birds. Ornithologist Jeff Marks led the birding expedition for Montana Audubon. Other trip participants attending this meeting may join the discussion.

Ron & Cheryl Farmer are members of Sacajawea Audubon Society. Ron received Montana Audubon's Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual Montana Bird Festival in Glasgow on June 4, 2011. The award recognizes a volunteer who has dedicated extraordinary effort, time, and energy to Audubon. Ron has donated decades of valuable service to the chapter, the state, and the birds. Cheryl has participated in birding also for decades, including trips to see birds around this country and abroad.

The Sacajawea Audubon Society invites the public to attend its meetings and participate in its field trips, listed on the chapter's website at www.sacajaweaaudubon.org/.

President's Comments: Spring migration

To bird seasonal migrations is rewarding in both number of birds and variety of species.

In 1843 John James Audubon journeyed up the Missouri River and visited Montana. In the journal of that trip, he wrote:

The migration of birds is perhaps much more wonderful than that of fishes, almost all of which go feeling their way along the shores and return to the very same river, creek, or even hole to deposit their spawn, as birds do to their former nest; but the latter do not feel their way, but launching high in air go at once and correctly too, across vast tracts of country, yet at once stopping in portions heretofore their own, and of which they know by previous experiences the comforts and advantages.

To bird, we may join a bird count at one of the Important Bird Areas that our chapter monitors. By doing so, we contribute to the massive citizen science program that helps conserve habitat for birds and other wildlife. These counts need to be, to use Audubon's phrase, "as regular as the migration of birds."

This spring, please enjoy the birds, the birding, and an environment healthy for birds, other wildlife, and us.

Anne Millbrooke

**President
 Sacajawea Audubon Society**

Wings Across the Big Sky

June 8–10, 2012

Kalispell, Montana

Flathead Audubon's Conservation Education Program

Flathead Audubon seeks to promote awareness and appreciation of the natural world through its Conservation Education Program. This program is the *only* staffed, locally independent program in the Flathead Valley that provides nature-based education free of charge. Close to five thousand children, youth and adults have been served during the past year through its community, family and school-related programs. And, it all happens with only one part-time, visionary education coordinator.

Flathead Audubon is striving to make the position of Conservation Education Coordinator sustainable for years to come. That's why Montana Audubon will be showing its support for this valuable program by sharing proceeds of the festival raffle, as well as dessert and live auctions at Saturday evening's banquet. And that's why we thank you for joining us in these lively fundraising events!

Friday Evening's Entertainment

Professor Avian Guano's "Migration Magic"

Professor Avian Guano, the world-renowned, eccentric German professor of ornithology will instruct and entertain us with his bird-brained slant on our neotropical avian friends. These "snowbirds" spend half their year in the tropics and half their year living with us in Montana. Professor Avian Guano will also share his legendary mimicry of bird songs and be one of three judges for our bird-calling contest. Come prepared to be the first to recognize the good professor's imitations as well as to demonstrate your own bird calling prowess! Prizes will be awarded on the spot for the most accurate AND the most "loony" songs.

Call for Montana Audubon Award Nominations!

"Over the fruitful earth and across the sea goes the bright gleam of noble deeds." –Pindar

We are now seeking nominations for 4 awards that will be given away at the annual meeting in Kalispell. The awards acknowledge individuals who exemplify a commitment to birds, other wildlife, and habitat conservation. The awards will be given for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Special Achievement, and Lifetime Achievement Award.

To nominate your candidate, please call the Montana Audubon office to request an award nomination form or download the form from our website at www.mtaudubon.org/about/awards.html. To be considered for this year's award, nominations and all supporting material must be postmarked no later than May 23, 2012. All nominations and supporting material should be sent to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624, or by fax: (406) 443-7144. The award ceremony will take place on June 9th at Montana Audubon's Bird Festival in Kalispell. Questions? Contact Janet Ellis at 406-443-3949 or jellis@mtaudubon.org.



Citizen Science Opportunity!



The first Headwaters' IBA Citizen Science effort will be April 14th, 2012. We'll meet at the Headwaters' State Park across from the campground in the Visitor's Kiosk parking lot at 8am. We'll be walking the trails in an effort to record data on species. Wet conditions are possible, please wear appropriate foot wear. Please feel free to call Annie Sisk at 406-285-6596 with any questions.

Little Orphan Raptor



Life is curious and often unexpected. Do you remember being a kid and thinking that maybe, just maybe you could

fly, especially if you believed enough? Well, that's not a purely human experience. Even while still covered in downy, non-flight feathers, young raptors have the incredible urge to take off into the wild blue yonder.

The spring and early summer are the seasons when you may see them on the ground after attempting to take a premature flight. Understanding the vulnerable position of such a young raptor, what can you do to help them in this situation? The best thing to do is first, call the raptor center. Knowledgeable staff and volunteers can help you evaluate the health of the bird from observation. In most cases, if the nestling is old enough to hold onto a branch they can be put back onto a branch above the

ground. Rest assured that the parents are keeping an eye on the curious youngsters, and they will continue to feed and take care of them. Raptor parents are extremely good at what they do in raising their little ones, so the vital lessons on "how to be a bird of prey" are best taught by raptor parents.

In extreme situations, where the nestling may be injured from the fall, or if they are not yet old enough to grasp a branch, MRCC will retrieve the bird for treatment. Even then great precautions are taken, as this beginning phase of life for a bird of prey is essential for bonding with their parents. Raptor masks and puppets are worn for feeding and no human sounds are made.

Every attempt is made to return them as quickly as possible to their parents. Young raptors can become imprinted on humans, if they are taken away from mom and dad and fed by a human. And while people may be interested in a deep connection with a bird of prey, the results are incredibly unfortunate for the raptor. Like most wild animals, raptors are meant to be in the wild, doing their job. But when a bird of prey is imprinted on a human, they do not learn the

essential life lessons of hunting, courtship, mating, etc. They will also be a hazard to humans as they will seek them out for food offerings, remembering that they were fed by humans at such a young age. Can you imagine a bald eagle landing on your lap for a meal, with a talon gripping strength of about 500 pounds of pressure per square inch? It would be painful to say the least. The only hope of survival for an imprinted raptor is a life in captivity, which is certainly not the ideal scenario, especially considering their relatively long life spans.

So, while you are out watching our fine feathered predator friends this spring, keep an eye out for the nestlings as they practice wing calisthenics in the trees before taking the maiden voyage. Do not hesitate to phone MRCC with any questions or concerns about young raptors that may be injured or orphaned. You are the first step in saving a life. Remember, it takes a village!

Article by Cynthia Zyzda

Photo by Becky Kean

Report injured raptors quickly! Montana Raptor Conservation Center is a non-profit raptor rehabilitation and education organization. (406) 585-1211

Bird Notes

On March 1st, Jack Kligerman had a close encounter with a **Northern Goshawk**. Jack was able to get terrific views of this beautiful raptor, as it perched for several minutes just outside his window south of Bozeman.

Annie Sisk has seen a **Short-eared Owl** south of Three Forks, on several occasions this winter. The area around Three Forks in recent years has consistently been the best place to find this increasingly uncommon owl.

While skiing up Sourdough Canyon on February 17th, Annie Woodward and Kathryn Hiestand spotted a **Hermit Thrush**, shortly after leaving the trailhead. Annie and Kathryn were also on the Christmas bird count team that found the count's first ever Hermit Thrush at Kirk Hill. As these two locations are only two

miles apart, it seems like a good possibility that this is the same bird.

The first reported **Mountain Bluebird** was seen March 9th, by Mary Griffith. After a diligent search, Mary found 3 bluebirds along Trail Creek Road in Paradise Valley. Two days later, 3 Mountain Bluebirds arrived over the hill at Noreen and Roger Breeding's yard, near the base of Mount Ellis.

The **Great-tailed Grackle** continued to be seen at the Gallatin Valley Mall, the first week of March.

-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



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 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

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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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

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

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