Sacajawea Audubon News

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 MARCH 2019

30

Ennis Lake Field Trip

APRIL 2019

12	Owl Prowl Field Trip
17	SAS Book Group Discussion
25 & 27	Cavity Nesters Birding Course and Field Trip

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May	SW Montana Sage
3–5	Grouse Lek Tour
May	World Migratory
10–11	Bird Day Festival
May 24–27	Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Tour
June 7–9	Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival in Glasgow, MT

SAS April 8th Program:

"Water & Birds in the Arid West" with Stan Senner



ater is the most precious resource for people and birds in the arid West, and increased competition for water coupled with a warming climate have huge implications for western birdlife. The National Audubon Society has made western water one its national priorities and is working to address water issues along the Colorado River and at saline lakes in the Intermountain West. Audubon's Vice President for Birds, Stan Senner, will focus his talk on saline lake ecosystems—landlocked saltwater lakes and associated freshwater wetlands—which create a network of feeding, breeding

and wintering sites for millions of birds in an otherwise arid landscape. Wilson's Phalaropes, American Avocets, Eared Grebes and other species are heavily dependent on saline lake habitats, which are in decline, both globally and in the Intermountain West. Stan will discuss the amazing birds using saline lakes, what the future holds for these ecosystems, and what can be done to conserve them.

Stan Senner brings a unique combination of skill and experience with birds, science, conservation, and public policy as Audubon's vice president for bird conservation. In his 45-year career, Stan's work has included executive director of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania, chief restoration planner and science coordinator for the state-federal ExxonValdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, and executive director of Audubon Alaska. In the early 1990s, Stan organized a migratory bird conservation program for National Audubon and started it's first Important Bird Area project. His current work for Audubon involves energy development and wildlife conservation in Arctic Alaska, water issues and birds in the Intermountain West, shorebirds and coastal conservation throughout the Pacific Americas Flyway, and defense of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Stan holds an M.S. in biology from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He and his wife live in Missoula.

Sacajawea Audubon Society programs are free and open to the public. Our programs feature a special guest speaker the 2nd Monday of each month, September through May, at Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf (off of S. 19th). Join us for a social at 6:30 pm, announcements at 7:00 pm followed by the program.



World Migratory Bird Day 2019 Events May 10th & 11th

oin Sacajawea Audubon as we celebrate one of the most spectacular events across the planet—MIGRATION! World Migratory Bird Day is a celebration of our planet's major migratory bird corridors, or flyways, namely the African-Eurasian, the East Asian-Australasian, and the Americas flyways. Events are taking place at refuges, parks, museums, schools, zoos and right here at Bozeman's Trails, Theaters and Library.

· · · · · · Schedule of Events · · ·

Friday, May 10th

7:00 pm at the Ellen Theater

Epic Yellowstone: Life on the Wing

Presented by Smithsonian Channel and Grizzly Creek Films. "Follow the birds that call Yellowstone home and see what it takes to survive in the park's unique environment." Stay after the film for a Q & A with the Bozeman based filmmakers.

Saturday, May 11th

All activities at the Bozeman Public Library

9 am: Bird Yoga

10 am-1 pm: Festival of Family Activities

Games - Crafts - Nature Walks - Live Birds Lots of information for adults as well!

Friday, April 12th, 2019: OWL PROWL

Leader: Tom Forwood

phone: (406) 570-6432

email: tjfishing75@gmail.com (email preferred)

Meet at the Museum of the Rockies at 7 pm.

Some of the owl species we hope to hear, and possibly see, include Northern Pygmy-Owl, Northern Saw-Whet Owl, Great Horned Owl, and possibly others. This is an evening field trip, so please dress for cold weather, including warm boots. Snowshoes are not necessary, but grippers might be helpful if conditions are icy. The location of the Owl Prowl is TBD possibly including several locations. Be prepared to be out well after dark. 10 person limit.



Illustration by Amy Kelley Hoitsma

2019 SACAJAWEA AUDUBON BIRDING WORKSHOPS

Birds inspire curiosity and a sense of wonder. Ever wonder who exactly is whistling "Hey Sweetie!" outside your window in the wee hours of the morning? Or how to identify a bird based on a flash of yellow feathers? Or what the little brown bird in the woodpile is called? Or why she's there in the first place? To help you answer all of these questions and more, Sacajawea Audubon Society is offering a Beginning Birding Workshop and Intermediate Birding Short Courses.

All courses will be taught by **Ashley Martens**, an experienced birder, naturalist, and outdoor educator. Ashley's approach to teaching birding engages all of your senses to tune in to what you see, hear, and love about the wild birds around us. Contact Ashley at ashmartens@yahoo.com or (208) 883-4998 for more information and to register for all classes detailed below.

BEGINNING BIRDING IN FOREST AND FIELD WORKSHOP

Participants will be introduced to the basics of birding through 3 evening classroom sessions and 3 field trips to a variety of habitats in the valley. We will cover bird families, common birds in our region, and what to look and listen for when seeking out the identity of a bird. There will be 2 sections of this course this year. Section A will have field trips on Friday mornings. Section B will have field trips on Saturday mornings. Sections A and B will meet together classroom sessions.

Classroom Sessions

Sections A & B: Thursday evenings, May 2, May 16, & June 6; 6:30–8 pm, Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trips

Section A: Friday mornings, May 3, May 17, & June 7, 7–10 am, Various Locations

Section B: Saturday mornings, May 4, May 18, & June 8; 7–10 am, Various Locations

Cost: \$95 for Sacajawea Audubon members; \$115 for non-members. Please make checks payable to "Sacajawea Audubon Society" and mail to Ashley Martens at 42 Hitching Post Rd., Bozeman, MT 59715.

Maximum 8 students per section. Supply lists will be provided upon registration.

INTERMEDIATE BIRDING SHORT COURSES

These are the perfect classes for birders who want to boost their birding skills up a notch and start studying more details of plumage, bird behaviors, and more sight and sound identification tips for specific bird families or groups. Choose as many courses as you like!

CAVITY NESTERS

Together we'll explore the ecology of birds in our region who either excavate their own cavities (like woodpeckers and nuthatches) or nest in existing cavities (like bluebirds, chickadees, and some owls). We'll also hone in on how to identify woodpeckers by calls, drums, and more. This trip happens early because most of these species breed early (and there are not so many leaves out so we can spot them easily)!

Classroom Session: Thurs, April 25th, 6:30–8 pm; **Field Trip**: Sat, April 27nd, 7–10 am

BIRD LANGUAGE

Birds are the true messengers of the forests. They can tell us if there's a fox hiding in the brush, a person about to run down the trail, or a sharp-shinned hawk or owl about to fly through. Come learn the ancient art of bird language. We'll learn the 5 voices of the bird and some alarm patterns in class. We'll practice identifying these voices and patterns in the field and conduct a "bird sit" together. Awareness of bird language also inevitably

leads to a deeper awareness of self.

Classroom Session: Thurs, May 9th, 6:30–8 pm; **Field Trip:** Sun, May 12th, 7–10 am

SPARROWS & ALLIES

Those little brown birds can be difficult to tease apart. We'll hone in on plumage, habitat, and songs and calls clues for the sparrows of our region so that we can begin to appreciate their subtle beauty and differences.

Classroom Session: Thurs, May 23rd, 6:30–8 pm; **Field Trip:** Friday, May 24th, 7–10 am

WARBLERS

What is better than yellow feathers?! Well, maybe orange ones! We'll learn to identify differences between these wonderfully little flashy, fidgety birds and sort them out with plumage, song/call, and habitat clues.

Classroom Session: Thurs, June 13th, 6:30–8 pm; **Field Trip:** Sat, June 15th, 7–10 am

THRUSHES & OTHER SONGSTERS: BIRDING BY EAR

The songs of the thrushes are some of the most magical sounds of summer. We'll learn to identify these birds by sight and song, as well as the many other lovely songsters in our region. This class will focus more on birding by ear than by sight, but of course we will take some time to explore and enjoy visual identification as well. Other bird families we will be sure to include are: vireos, flycatchers, grosbeaks, and the western tanager.

Classroom Session: Thurs, June 20th, 6:30–8 pm; **Field Trip:** Sat, June 22nd, 7–10 am

Cost per short course: \$45 for Sacajawea Audubon members; \$55 for non-members. Please make checks payable to "Sacajawea Audubon Society" and mail to Ashley Martens at 42 Hitching Post Rd., Bozeman, MT 59715.

Maximum 8 students. Supply lists will be provided upon registration.



MARCH BIRD NOTES

by John Parker

pring is getting off to a slow start here in southwestern Montana, with early March looking more like early January. The first local sighting for Mountain Bluebirds finally came in on March 14th when Vic Fesolowitz saw 6 of them on Carpenter Road east of Logan. The first bluebird sighting usually comes during the first week of March or even the last few days of February. But right on time the first California Gulls were seen March 10th by Brent Miller, near the Logan Dump. Next up: Sandhill Cranes!

On February 28th Lynn and John Mugaas were very surprised to see a Northern Goshawk in their west Bozeman yard. They were able to get excellent photos of the adult goshawk as it perched in a nearby tree, after reducing the neighborhood Eurasian **Collared-Dove** population by one.

Generally, it has been a slow winter for most finches, but in early March Nora Miller had at least two **Pine Grosbeaks** coming to her feeders off of Trail Creek Road east of Bozeman. The two Common Redpolls coming to Vic Fesolowitz and Kim Obbink's feeders southeast of Bozeman, were notable for being just about the only redpolls reported anywhere in Montana this past winter.

Winter records for Lincoln's Sparrow are very limited in Montana, so it was surprising to have two sightings in our area this past month. On February 23rd Eric Atkinson found a Lincoln's Sparrow



Mountain Bluebird by Lou Ann Harris

in one of the city parks in northwest Bozeman. Then eleven days later Paul Regnier discovered another Lincoln's Sparrow along the Boiling River Trail in Yellowstone National Park.

Jim Manning spotted a different looking blackbird in the out-flow ditch at Central Park Pond on February 18th. After a closer look Jim was able to identify the bird as a Rusty Blackbird, which was especially gratifying as it was a life bird for him.

Last Book of the Season

Mozart's Starling, by Lyanda Lynn Haup, tells the story of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's three-year bond with a starling, described as his companion and muse. Haup, a naturalist and birder, also explores "human-animal friendships, music, and the secret world of starlings." The book discussion is Wednesday, April 17, at Hope Lutheran Church from 4:00-5:15 pm. If you are attending for the first time, please let Adele Pittendrigh know you are attending:

MONTANA SPRING 2019 BIRDING TOURS

SW MONTANA SAGE-GROUSE "LEK" TOUR May 3–5, 2019 (3-day, 2-night)

This Southwest Montana bird watching tour of sagebrushsteppe, grassland and wetland habitats in the Dillon area will be great fun for birders of all skill levels. This 2.5-day, 2-night guided trip will start before dawn in Grasshopper Valley to witness displaying male Greater Sage-Grouse at one of the largest breeding leks in Beaverhead County, near Bannack State Park. We will also be searching for other shrub-steppe songbirds (Sage & Brewer's sparrows, Gray Flycatcher, Sage Thrasher, Vesper Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, etc.). Participants will also enjoy birding the alfalfa fields and grazing lands north of Dillon, with spectacular views of Bald & Golden eagles, Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk (nesting), Long-billed Curlew, McCown's Longspur, Say's Phoebe, and possibly Burrowing Owl. The trip will take you into the Pioneer Mountains along Birch Creek in search of various forest birds, including woodpeckers, jays, raptors and passerines. The wetlands and shorelines of Clark Canyon Reservoir will provide good views of a great many waterbirds, including various ducks, loons, grebes, pelicans and shorebirds. In addition to the birding we will explore the historic Bannack ghost town, which was a booming mining town beginning in the early 1860s. Your 2-night stay will be at a beautiful lodge west of Dillon with spectacular views of the Pioneer Mountains and the Grasshopper Valley.

\$495/person (Non SAS members \$545)

Guide: Billy Burton. Billy has guided trips in Alaska and Montana. Raised in central Idaho by parents that were Naturalist, he strives to spend every free minute in the pursuit of things wild. As a Wildlife Biologist, he has worked with many wildlife conservation agencies and organizations, including research work on sage grouse in Southwest Montana. He holds a degree in Biology, Wildlife Biology, and a Master's degree in Natural Resource Management.



RED ROCK LAKES NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE May 24–27, 2019 (4-day, 3-night)

Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge is located in the incredibly scenic and isolated Centennial Valley of southwestern Montana, about 50 miles west of Yellowstone National Park. This 4-day, 3-night tour will take you into a vast array of habitat, ranging from high elevation wetland and prairie habitat at 6,600 feet, to the mountain forests of the Centennial Mountains (which ascend to over 10.000 feet above sea level). It is this diverse, wetland-prairie-sagebrush-montane environment that gives Red Rock Lakes its unique character. Nesting birds are abundant throughout Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge at this time of year, with 120+ species possible. Red Rock Lakes is best known for being the primary location for heroic efforts in the 1930s to save the Trumpeter Swan from extinction. In addition to the majestic swan, there are another 230 bird species within the refuge, including: Long-billed Curlew, Sandhill Crane, Red-necked Grebe, Blackcrowned Night-Heron, American White Pelican, Sora, Whitefaced Ibis, American Avocet, Willet, Northern Harrier, Bald & Golden eagles, Swainson's & Ferruginous hawks, Prairie Falcon, Short-eared Owl, Sage Thrasher and various ducks, flycatchers, kinglets, warblers, vireos, tanagers, thrushes, woodpeckers and, if we're lucky, Greater Sage-Grouse! Your 3-night stay will be at a resort that borders Red Rock Lake Refuge and Elk Lake. This perfect location for this birding tour provides comfortable individual cabins and country-gourmet cooking.

\$975/person (Non SAS members \$1,025)

Guide: Steve Hoffman with Merlin Bird and Nature Tours. Over the past 15 years, Steve has led many Audubon birding tours to Belize, Costa Rica, Mexico's Copper Canyon, Veracruz, Oaxaca & Baja California regions, and throughout Montana. Steve has devoted his entire 38-year career to wildlife conservation, first as an Endangered Species Biologist; he later founded HawkWatch International and served as Executive Director for a number of conservation organizations. He received his Master's Degree in Wildlife Ecology from Utah State University. Sacajawea Audubon Society is proud to have Steve as an active member as Bozeman is his home base.

Tours include travel from Bozeman, lodging (additional charges for a single room), most meals and guide. For a full description of the tours and registration form, visit the Sacajawea Audubon website (sacajaweaaudubon.org).

Questions? Do not hesitate to contact Loreene Reid at loreener@sacajaweaaudubon.org or (406) 600-6666.

30b Wick, Bureau of Land Management

Plants for Birds: Wild Bergamot (Bee Balm, Horsemint)

Scientific Name: Monarda fistulosa

Height: 2-4 feetHardiness: Zone 4

• Wildlife Value: Nectar filled flowers attract hummingbirds,

bees, butterflies, and other insects.



Lou Ann Harris

Wild Bergamot is a widely distributed Montana native perennial plant that, when in bloom, is a favorite of hummingbirds and other pollinators. It has a showy, fragrant lavender flower-head comprised of terminal clusters of tubular flowers, each containing nectar. Since the native plants are fairly drought resistant once established they are good for water-wise gardens, as well as butterfly gardens, perennial borders, and bird-friendly gardens. Both the native plant and numerous Monarda cultivars of various colors can be found in local nurseries. The bright red Monarda 'Gardenview Scarlet' cultivar is an absolute hummingbird magnet. Luckily deer and rabbits avoid eating the plants, probably due to the oregano-mint flavor of the leaves.

Historically the plant was used as a medicine by many native American tribes. This included boiling the leaves for teas to relieve headache and colds. Some used it in sweat baths and others made poultices or cured stomach pains with it. Early settlers used it as a relief for nausea.

When planting Wild Bergamot with its lovely purple blossoms and fragrant leaves, here are some things to remember. This native plant flowers from June to September, and can grow from 2 to 4 feet tall. It thrives in full sun and moist soil but tolerates part shade, low to medium watering, and poor clay and rocky soils. It spreads by rhizomes and can be divided after 3-4 years establishment. It is somewhat drought tolerant but needs good air circulation due to mildew. Pinching back the flower heads in summer will promote longer flowering. Any of the Monarda species are best planted in clusters of several plants.

Watch for hummingbirds to visit your flowers as well as a variety of insects such as long-tongued bees, bee flies, miner bees, cuckoo bees, skippers and certain kinds of moths.

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Snack Schedule for Monthly Meetings

PLEASE NOTE:

If your first or last name begins with the first letter of the month, please try to bring a snack. If your name doesn't match any month...pick a month of your choice (just one) and bring a snack. Hopefully this will eliminate the need to sign up.

No time to bake? No problem. Bring a bunch of bananas, a bag of apples, or chips. This will also ensure that folks with gluten issues have something to snack on. We'll see how this works.

Don't forget! If your name (first or last) begins with "A" (all you "Alices and Adams" out there) please bring a snack for the April Meeting!

THOUGHTS? SUGGESTIONS?

Contact Sherry Staub at (563) 370-0757 or scstaub@mchsi.com

Wings Across the Big Sky

"Montana Audubon will host its **20th annual Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival** at the Cottonwood Inn, in Glasgow on **June 7th–9th**, **2019**! This long-standing community event celebrates Montana' native bird species and typically draws hundreds of wildlife enthusiasts from across the state and beyond. For 2019 the festival lead sponsor is American Prairie Reserve (APR).

Online registration is now **OPEN** and our stunning, full color brochure can be downloaded on our website:

mtaudubon.org/birding/montana-bird-festival/

REGISTER TODAY: Field trips are filling up fast!

Hope to see you on Montana's vast eastern prairies in June!



Sacajawea Audubon Society Membership 2019

Individual or Family

Basic Membership\$25

Supporting Membership\$50
(Supporting local conservation & education project)

Additional Donation\$

Bridger Raptor Study

Education

Wetland Campaign

Wherever is Needed

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Sacajawea Audubon News is <u>sent by email.</u> There is a \$10 annual fee for a paper copy mailed to you.

Make Your Check Payable to: Sacajawea Audubon Society

- I would like a paper newsletter mailed to me and have included an additional \$10 to cover the annual cost.
- We do not share your information except with Montana Audubon, so your contact information is safe with us.
- ❖ I do not want your information shared with: ☐ National Audubon Society ☐ Montana Audubon

Thank you for your membership and donation. We look forward to birding with you!

Newsletter 04/19



Sacajawea Audubon Society P.O. Box 1711 Bozeman, MT 59771-1771

Change Service Requested

Sacajawea Audubon Society, affiliated with the National Audubon Society, meets on the second Monday of each month, September through May.

Sacajawea Audubon Society Monthly Newsletter is available electronically to all Sacajawea Audubon Society members September through May. Members and non-members can receive a mailed paper newsletter for an annual \$10 subscription fee. Please send your check to the address above.

Deadline for article submission is the 15th of the month preceding the month the articles will appear. Send articles electronically to Stephanie Nelson at: newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

Change of Address: If you have a change of address or are away, please notify membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org. Undeliverable mailed newsletters are returned to us for an extra fee.

Find more at the **Sacajawea Audubon Society website** at: <u>sacajaweaaudubon.org</u>

Nominate a Conservation Leader for a 2019 Montana Audubon Award!

ominations are now being accepted for Montana Audubon's 2019 awards. Consider nominating someone you know for Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Educator of the Year, Citizen Scientist of the Year, or a Lifetime Achievement award!

Nomination forms can be found on our website: mtaudubon.org/about/awards/. The deadline for nominations is **May 20, 2019**. Please submit via email (preferred) to info@mtaudubon.org or by mail to Montana Audubon, PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624. Award winners will be announced at our Bird Festival banquet in Glasgow on June 8th.

AWARD CATEGORIES:

- ☐ Conservationist of the Year. For an individual who has provided significant wildlife conservation achievement in Montana.
- **Environmental Educator of the Year.** For a person who has shown outstanding achievement in educating others about birds, other wildlife, and conservation of habitat.
- Citizen Scientist of the Year. For a person contributing significantly to our knowledge and understanding of birds and their habitats through monitoring and observations.
- ☐ **Lifetime Achievement Award.** For an Audubon volunteer who has dedicated extraordinary effort, time and energy to shape the activities and successes of a local Audubon Chapter and/or Montana Audubon.

Solitaire by Lou Ann Harris