



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

6	SAS Book Group Discussion
7	SAS Board Meeting at the Lehrkind Mansion
8-9	Birds of SW Montana & the Changing of Our Climate, Workshop and Field Trip
9	Raptor Field Trip
11	SAS Monthly Program
30	Ennis Lake Field Trip

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Mar. 30- Apr. 17	SAS Book Group Discussion
May 3-5	SW Mt. Sage Grouse Lek Tour
May 10-11	World Migratory Bird Day
May 24-27	Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Tour
June 7-9	Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival in Glasgow, MT

Berkeley Pit Waterfowl Mitigation Program

In the fall of 2017, 99.7% of all birds that landed in the Berkeley Pit in Butte were successfully hazed off the pit thanks to the efforts of Gary Swant, Stella Capoccia and their fellow board members of the Berkeley Pit Waterfowl Mitigation Advisory Board. The board is tasked with finding solutions to the waterfowl and white goose migration issues at the pit. Stella Capoccia is chair and Gary Swant is vice-chair for the board.

At our March 11th program, Gary and Stella will share the methods used to achieve this high rate of success in both preventing birds from landing in the pit and preventing mortality in birds that do land. In 2018, Swant and Capoccia received the 2018 Wildlife Conservation Award from the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society for their work in reducing bird mortality at the Berkeley Pit.

Gary Swant received his Bachelor's in Education with an emphasis in Biological Sciences and his Master's in Education with an emphasis in Environmental Education from the University of Montana. Swant taught biology and field ecology at Powell County High School in Deer Lodge for 25 years, retiring in 1993. While teaching he received the Montana "Outstanding Biology Teacher" of the Year, Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching, and the Montana Environmental Educator of the Year Awards. In 2005, Swant founded GoBirdMontana, LLC, which continues today, and conducts field ornithological research for private corporations, state, and federal agencies. In 2016, Montana Audubon recognized Gary's work by presenting him the 2016 Citizen Scientist Award.

Dr. Stella Capoccia is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at Montana Tech. Dr. Capoccia's main research interests focus on human dimensions of wildlife management and the human-animal relationship. Her current research looks at trends in waterfowl migration and helping to develop an up-dated mitigation plan for the Berkeley Pit. Dr. Capoccia also studies the social dynamics of urban chickens and how that could result in exposure to disease and new conceptual views of the urban pigeon. In the past, her field work included working toward the conservation of the Sonoran pronghorn in southern Arizona and brown and black bear conservation with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

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.



Berkeley Pit, Butte, MT. Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia USA.

MARCH FIELD TRIPS



Raptor Field Trip

Join us for a morning searching for raptors, along the roads of the northern Gallatin Valley. On this early spring trip, the focus will be on finding raptors, but there should be some other interesting birds along this route. The trip ends early in the afternoon at Central Park Pond.

Be sure to dress for the weather and bring any necessary drinks or snacks for this 4-5 hour trip. If you have a spotting scope that you can bring, that would be helpful. This trip will meet at the Museum of the Rockies parking lot at 8:15 am on Saturday, March 9. After arranging for carpooling, we will leave at 8:30.

There is a 12 person limit for this trip. For more information call John Parker at **586-5863** or email birdsightings@sacajaweaudubon.org.

Bald eagle and Ennis Lake photos by Lou Ann Harris.

Spring Birding at Ennis Lake

A sure cure for spring fever is lots of early spring birds! The primary focus of this trip will be the migrating waterfowl at Ennis Lake. At this time of year, the ducks will be at their dazzling best in full breeding plumage, and usually in great abundance. Along with the waterfowl, this trip will provide a good opportunity for finding other early migrants such as Sandhill Cranes, Tree Swallows, and Mountain Bluebirds.

It is spring in Montana so be sure to be prepared for the weather, with plenty of warm layers of clothing for a day out in the elements. We will return to the museum mid-afternoon, so bring a lunch and snacks. If you have a spotting scope to bring, that would be helpful. This trip will meet at the Museum of the Rockies parking lot at 8 am Saturday March 30. After arranging for carpooling, we will head for Ennis Lake at 8:15.

There is a 12 person limit for the trip, so sign up early. Contact John Parker at **586-5863** or email birdsightings@sacajaweaudubon.org to reserve a spot.

Birds of Southwest Montana and the Changing of Our Climate Workshop

What are scientific models predicting for birds and climate change in Southwest Montana? “You often hear of climate change being all doom and gloom, but one of the findings is that in winter especially, parks are going to become more important sanctuaries for birds,” says Audubon Society avian biologist Joanna Wu. Some birds may even stop migrating if winters are mild enough that they can tolerate local conditions, says Wu.

Sacajawea Audubon Society’s *Birds of Southwest Montana and the Changing of Our Climate Workshop* will look at five birds in Southwest Montana and the challenges they have, with regards

to patterns of migration or breeding in Montana. What healthy habitats do these migrating and breeding birds need? A dangerous myth is that we simply can’t solve the effect of the changing of our climate. That is not true. We will look at what we can do to shape the future of our Bird-friendly Communities.

Cost: \$20/ person (\$45 for non-members; net proceeds will be used to support Bird Friendly Community Projects)



Classroom: Friday, March 8, 2019, 6:30–8:00 pm, Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trip: Saturday, March 9, 2019, 9:00 am–1:00 pm, Hope Lutheran Church Parking Lot

Registration is limited. Register on-line at sacajaweaudubon.org. For more information or to register by phone, call Loreene Reid at 600-6666.

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 sagebrush-steppe, 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 two-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.



Bob Wick, Bureau of Land Management

RED ROCK LAKES NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

May 24-27, 2019 (4-day, 3-nights)

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 ft. 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 1930's 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, Black-crowned Night-Heron, American White Pelican, Sora, White-faced 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 three-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 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 600-6666.





FEBRUARY BIRD NOTES

A single **Snow Goose** was first seen by Audrey Evers January 29th at Galactic Park Pond in the Four Corners area. This bird continued to be seen at this location until February 3. Another Snow Goose had been at Central Park Pond during the second week of January, along with large numbers of other waterfowl, including up to 99 **Trumpeter Swans**, until the sub-zero temperatures in early February froze the pond.

The most exciting bird this past month was the **Dunlin** discovered February 4th at the Blackbird Fishing Access Site near Three Forks by Tom Forwood. This bird was seen by many others, and was still present until mid-February. With a circumpolar breeding range, Dunlins are the most wide spread sandpiper, but their migration routes typically by-pass Montana. When Dunlin are seen in Montana, it is usually during the spring migration. As common as Dunlin are on the West Coast during the winter months, this is only the sixth winter record for Montana. Montana's second winter record for Dunlin and longest lingering bird was at Central Park Pond 16 January until 4 March 2000.

While traveling Highway 89 on both January 24th and 25th, Sue Williams saw a male **American Kestrel** on the power lines near Emigrant in Paradise Valley.

On February 5th Andrew Guttenberg saw a **Hermit Thrush** sunning itself along the Sourdough Nature Trail. This is likely the same Hermit Thrush that Robin Wolcott saw at the same location December 14th.



Sandhill Cranes by Lou Ann Harris

Linda and Ray Forrest first saw a single **Spotted Towhee** at their Paradise Valley home on December 16th, then four days later they saw a second Spotted Towhee in the yard. Both towhees were still there until at least February 12th. West of Belgrade, Joan Ryshavy has had a pair of **Song Sparrows** frequenting her yard since the New Year.

Katy Duffy first noted a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** in her Gardiner yard December 8th and it was still coming around until at least the middle of January. While in the yard, this hardy warbler was eating Russian Olives.

While walking near Four Corners Hobart Collins saw two **Western Meadowlarks** on a large haystack along Beatty Road. Todd Trotter on February 1st noted that two pair of **Red-winged**

Blackbirds had returned to the cattail marsh at Trout Meadows in west Bozeman. Todd said that this was the earliest he'd seen them at this location.

It won't be long before we are listening for the first cranes, and the meadowlarks and blackbirds will be in full song!

Beginning Birding Classes

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes the always popular birding classes taught by Ashley Martens. We are again offering our **Beginner Birding** course that runs April through June, as well as several intermediate courses. Please visit SacajaweaAudubon.org for the full schedule and to sign up today. Don't delay, as these courses fill up fast!



Report from Florida: Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival

By Adele Pittendrigh. Photos by Lou Ann Harris.

Four members of Sacajawea Audubon—Lou Ann Harris, Adele Pittendrigh, Martha and Hobart Collins—traveled to Titusville, Florida, for the five-day Space Coast Festival. Lou Ann and Adele arrived early and had a wonderful day birding at the Ritch Grissom Memorial Wetlands before the festival started. Highlights included great views of two life birds: Limpkins and Glossy Ibis, as well as Common and Purple Gallinule, Little Blue, Tri-colored, Green, and Great Blue Herons, Anhinga, American Bittern, White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill and many other species. What a rich and colorful introduction to the area's wetlands! Later that day, a female Anhinga seemed to take an interest in us, vocalizing softly as we walked by, then flying on ahead and vocalizing again as we approached, while two alligators (one very large) lay in the sunshine near the walking path.

We toured Parrish Park with Scott Weidensaul and Alex Lamoureux, where we saw crowds of shorebirds, including Sanderling, Dunlin, Western Sandpiper, about 30 Roseate Spoonbills, 100 American Avocet, 200 White Ibis, 200 Black Skimmers, Gull-billed, Caspian, Forster's and Royal Terns, Red Knot, Red-shouldered Hawk, and more. We learned that when a flock of shorebirds instantaneously takes flight that is called "a dread of shorebirds."

On our last tour with the festival we watched Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Pine Warblers, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-bellied Woodpecker—all busy in the Longleaf Pine forest. We saw a beautiful Red-headed Woodpecker high in a tall snag and a beautiful Cracker Cow, a small breed with big curved horns brought to Florida by the Spanish Conquistadors. We saw one Whooping Crane who seemed to be right at home with the cows, and later in the day, we saw Snail Kites and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, plus two Red-shouldered Hawks courting.

Florida Scrub Jays seemed to be as interested in looking at us as we were in them, and one tried to land on Lou Ann's head. We heard that when feeding the birds was allowed, people put nuts on their heads for the jays. The jays still like to land on people's heads. The next day all the festival trips were cancelled because of rain and high waves. Undaunted, the Montana contingent went looking for Painted Buntings and was rewarded with long looks at two spectacular males and females.

Our own Denver Holt, a Montana owl expert extraordinaire, gave the keynote address on owls and their behavior and received the 2018 American Birding Association Chandler Robbins Award for Education/Conservation for his contributions to the education of birders and conservation of birds.



2019 Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival

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 longstanding community event celebrates Montana's 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).

Numerous field trips are in the works that highlight the remarkable grassland habitats of Montana's highline. The keynote address will be presented on Friday evening by Sean Gerrity, American Prairie Reserve founder, who will discuss the importance of the project to Montana's grassland birds and other species. Additional speakers will discuss conservation issues affecting this ecologically unique region. Native prairies are some of the most threatened habitats on earth: in North America, just over one-percent remains undeveloped. Montana's glaciated plains landscape contains large areas of intact grasslands along with the stunning and fragile birdlife these habitats support. Montana Audubon is proud to host its 20th bird festival in this beautiful, wildlife-rich area of our state.

There are many other fun activities to choose from at Wings Across the Big Sky including a Saturday evening banquet, Montana Audubon's annual conservation awards, "Nature Adventure Tour" silent auction, "Cakes for Conservation" fundraiser and more. For more information, visit the "Outreach" section of Montana Audubon's website: mtaudubon.org or call **443-3949**.



Last Book This Year

The last book for the SAS Book Group this year, **Mozart's Starling** by Lyanda Lynn Haupt, is a delightful account of Mozart's—and Haupt's—relationship with a starling.

The discussion is April 17, 2019, at Hope Lutheran Church, from 4:00–5:15 pm. All SAS members are welcome to participate.



SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Board of Directors:

President	Lou Ann Harris pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Vice President	John Edwards johnedwards@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Secretary	Adele Pittendrigh sec@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Treasurer	Janne Hayward tres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Loreene Reid loreener@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Chris Nixon chrifnixon@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Sharon Hanton sharonhanton@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Billy Burton billyburton@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Travis Kidd traviskidd@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Debi Naccarto debinaccarto@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Stephanie Nelson stephanienelson@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Board Members:

MSU Student Leadership	Jackson St. Clair jacksonstclair@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Committee Chairs & Project Leaders:

Conservation Chair	Paulette Epple conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Education Chair	Travis Kidd traviskidd@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Bird Sightings	John Parker birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Field Trips	John Parker birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Newsletter	Stephanie Nelson newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Monthly Program	Carl Roth programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Website	Stephanie Nelson stephanienelson@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Membership	Loreene Reid membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Hospitality	Sherry Staub hospitality@sacajaweaaudubon.org



Sacajawea Audubon Society Membership 2019

Individual or Family
(January to December 2019)

- Basic Membership \$25
- Supporting Membership \$50
(Supporting local conservation & education project)
- Additional Donation \$ _____
 - Bridger Raptor Study
 - Education
 - Wetland Campaign
 - Wherever is Needed

Name _____

Address _____
(Street or PO Box)

_____ *(City)* _____ *(State)* _____ *(Zip)*

Phone () _____

Email _____

Sacajawea Audubon News is sent by email. 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 03/19

We Need Your Help for 2019 World Migratory Bird Day May 10–11 in Bozeman, MT

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. Last year's event uplifted the community as hundreds of children turned into their favorite bird and celebrated the migration.

We need your help planning the 2019 event. Contact Travis Kidd at traviskidd@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Thank you for volunteering for Sacajawea Audubon Society 2019 World Migratory Bird Day Festival!

Your Sacajawea Audubon Membership

Sacajawea Audubon (SAS) encourages everyone who enjoys our field trips and monthly programs or supports our conservation work to join the local chapter. Even if you belong to National Audubon, we need your support through a Local SAS Membership. 100% of your Local Membership dues will directly support SAS's education and conservation programs. We rely on financial and volunteer support from local members to carry out our wide array of programs.

I AM INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING:

- Bird Surveys and other Citizen Science Programs
- Watch at Home Project
- Assist with Educational Activities
- Invasive Plant Removal
- Newsletter and/or Website Articles
- Help with Refreshments at Meeting
- Participate in Chapter Birdathon
- I interested in _____

As a chapter of National Audubon Society and participating chapter of Montana Audubon, we fully value and support their work and advocacy. We encourage you, in addition to your SAS local membership, to join or renew your membership in National Audubon (join online at www.sacajaweaaudubon.org).





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: sacajaweaaudubon.org

Montana Audubon at Work: 2019 Legislative Session

Since the early 1980s, Montana Audubon has maintained a strong lobbying presence during Montana's bi-annual legislative session. This year, as in decades past, the team has been providing testimony, meeting with legislators and working tirelessly to support bills which are favorable to conservation, as well as helping block ones which are detrimental to our mission.

Bills we focus on fall into a few broad categories: wildlife, climate and energy, general environmental protection, public lands and

recreation, and land use planning. As of mid-February, the team has testified on 32 bills, supporting 18 and opposing 14.

Curious to know the specifics? Montana Audubon regularly posts updated tables with bill descriptions, sponsor information and explanations of the organization's position on our website. Please visit mtaudubon.org/conservation-policy and click on the "Montana Legislature" button to view the bill table. You can also find handy links to your elected officials in state government on this page.

Stay up-to-date on our policy work via our newsfeed where we post regular legislative alerts: check out mtaudubon.org/news. The best way to receive the latest is to join our action network where we can send you important updates from the capital directly to your inbox! Visit mtaudubon.org and hit the [Join Our Online Network](#) button at the bottom of the page.

Many thanks for your interest in Montana Audubon's conservation work!

Photo by Martin Kraft (martinkraft.com)