



# Sacajawea Audubon News

*Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) builds on an interest in birds to promote the conservation of our natural environment through enjoyment, education, and action.*

*SAS Monthly Program: Monday, January 13 at Hope Lutheran Church*

## A Brief History on the Origin and Evolution of Birds with Ashley Hall, Outreach Program Manager, Museum of the Rockies

**T**ake flight through time in this fascinating lecture that traces the origin and evolution of birds from their dinosaur ancestors to the diverse species we see today. Beginning with the dramatic rise of the theropod dinosaurs, we'll explore the pivotal adaptations—such as feathers, flight, and changes in metabolism—that led to the rise of modern birds. Discover how these creatures survived mass extinctions, evolved new forms of locomotion, and adapted to a wide range of environments, from the skies to the oceans. We'll also delve into the latest scientific discoveries, including cutting-edge fossil evidence and genetic research, that have reshaped our understanding of avian evolution. From the first feathered dinosaurs to the global avian family tree, this lecture will show how birds are not just descendants of ancient creatures but also living proof of evolutionary ingenuity. Whether you're a birdwatcher, a dinosaur enthusiast, or just curious about the natural world, this lecture will leave you with a new appreciation for the remarkable creatures soaring above us—and a deeper understanding of how they came to rule the skies.

Ashley Hall is a paleontologist, naturalist, and Outreach Program Manager at the Museum of the Rockies. She earned a BA in Anthropology and Animal Behavior from Indiana University Bloomington in 2007 and has spent 16 years as an informal educator in museums and zoos, including the L.A.



*Ashley Hall. Photo courtesy of Museum of the Rockies*

Zoo, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, La Brea Tar Pits, and Cleveland Museum of Natural History. A passionate science communicator, Ashley has authored three children's books and runs a free virtual program on Fridays called Fossil Friday. In her spare time, you can find her (crouched with binoculars and a phone with the e-bird app open) birding in Bozeman's many birding hotspots.

**The in-person meeting will be held Monday, January 13, 2025 at Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 West Graf (off**

S. 19th). A social begins at 6:30 PM; the program begins at 7:00 PM. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own reusable cups.

**For virtual attendance**, please register at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4451044515100506716>

**Attendees—whether in person or virtual—are encouraged to share their bird sightings at this and every monthly program.**

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SAS monthly programs are free and open to the public, featuring a special guest speaker the 2nd Monday of each month, September through May. For more information, contact Ken Sinay at [programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org).

### UPCOMING SAS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

**February 10** – Carol Polich ,wildlife & wild-places photographer

**March 10** – Matt Bell, Wildlife Biologist - GIS Coordinator/Land Steward with Montana Land Reliance

*Renew your SAS Membership for 2025 to stay informed about upcoming programs, classes, and more!*

MESSAGE from  
SAS PRESIDENT, CHRIS NIXON



I HOPE and trust you all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

There is still the opportunity for you to participate in the **final CBC of the season, Saturday, January 4th**, in the Ruby Valley. Spending a wonderful day outdoors in the beautiful Ruby Valley would certainly make a spectacular way to start off the new year! (see page 5)

We start off this new year going back to the origins of our passion (birds) as Ashley Hall, Paleontologist and Outreach Program Manager with the Museum of the Rockies provides *A Brief History on the Origin and Evolution of Birds* at our **first Monthly Membership Meeting, January 13, 2025**. (see page 1)

So that you can keep bird evolution moving forward in Montana, become informed and empowered as to how to **advocate for all our birds as the kickoff of the 69th session of the Montana Legislature begins** on January 6, 2025. Beth Madden provides you with information sources so that you can help make a difference. (page 4)

This **first SAS Book Club meeting of 2025**, January 15th, will discuss Christian Cooper's *Better Living Through Birding: Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World*. In person and virtual options. (page 7)

Scats, Tracks, and other Signs are the topic of our first **Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Trivia Night of 2025** at Lockhorn Cider House on January 21st (page 5).

**Master Naturalist and Wetland Master Naturalist Courses** are again being offered in 2025. (page 5)

The Gallatin Valley has been experiencing unseasonably warm weather this winter. **The bears are still active!** Please remain bear aware and reference *Bears and Birdfeeders* on our website at <https://sacajaweaudubon.org/bears-and-bird-feeders/>.

And also please remember to wash and maintain your birdfeeding stations. **Avian influenza** is yet again an issue this year.

**We honor two wonderful long time SAS members that will be greatly missed** in 2025 and beyond. They have left a strong legacy. (pages 6 & 7)

**We welcome our newest SAS Board Member**, Halle Nienhaus.

Of course .... if you haven't already done so, one of the best actions you can take to help promote awareness of and protection of birds in our area is to **renew your memberships in SAS and NA for 2025**. Find more details on the last page of this newsletter.

**We are glad to have you with us!**

Sacajawea Audubon Society Newsletter .....

## SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

### Officers

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| President      | Chris Nixon<br><a href="mailto:pres@sacajaweaudubon.org">pres@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>    |
| Vice President | <b>Open Position</b>   |
| Treasurer      | Loreene Reid<br><a href="mailto:treas@sacajaweaudubon.org">treas@sacajaweaudubon.org</a> |
| Secretary      | Emma Narotzky<br><a href="mailto:sec@sacajaweaudubon.org">sec@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>    |

### Board Members

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Aaron Clausen                         | <a href="mailto:aaronclausen@sacajaweaudubon.org">aaronclausen@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>       |
| John Edwards                          | <a href="mailto:johnedwards@sacajaweaudubon.org">johnedwards@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>         |
| Ben Goodheart                         | <a href="mailto:bengoodheart@sacajaweaudubon.org">bengoodheart@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>       |
| Mikaela Howie                         | <a href="mailto:mikaelahowie@sacajaweaudubon.org">mikaelahowie@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>       |
| Frank Marchak                         | <a href="mailto:frankmarchak@sacajaweaudubon.org">frankmarchak@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>       |
| Doug McSpadden                        | <a href="mailto:dougmcspadden@sacajaweaudubon.org">dougmcspadden@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>     |
| Halle Neinhaus                        | <a href="mailto:halleneinhaus@sacajaweaudubon.org">halleneinhaus@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>     |
| Vicki Saab                            | <a href="mailto:vickisaab@sacajaweaudubon.org">vickisaab@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>             |
| Ken Sinay                             | <a href="mailto:kensinay@sacajaweaudubon.org">kensinay@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>               |
| Boardroom Bobcat member Talia Seltzer | <a href="mailto:boardroombobcat@sacajaweaudubon.org">boardroombobcat@sacajaweaudubon.org</a> |

### Activity Leaders

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Education Chair                           | <b>Open Position</b>   |
| Conservation Co-Chairs                    | Paulette Epple<br><a href="mailto:conservation@sacajaweaudubon.org">conservation@sacajaweaudubon.org</a><br>Lou Ann Harris<br><a href="mailto:louann@sacajaweaudubon.org">louann@sacajaweaudubon.org</a> |
| Field Trips, Bird Sightings               | John Parker<br><a href="mailto:birdsightings@sacajaweaudubon.org">birdsightings@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>  |
| Hospitality                               | <b>Open Position</b>   |
| Membership                                | Loreene Reid<br><a href="mailto:membership@sacajaweaudubon.org">membership@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>   |
| Newsletter                                | Terri Narotzky<br><a href="mailto:newsletter@sacajaweaudubon.org">newsletter@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>   |
| Programs                                  | Ken Sinay<br><a href="mailto:programs@sacajaweaudubon.org">programs@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>  |
| Website                                   | Lou Ann Harris & Doug McSpadden<br><a href="mailto:webmaster@sacajaweaudubon.org">webmaster@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>  |
| Social Media/ Communications              | Lou Ann Harris and Mikaela Howie<br><a href="mailto:socialmedia@sacajaweaudubon.org">socialmedia@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>   |
| Wetlands Preservation                     | Loreene Reid<br><a href="mailto:wetlands@sacajaweaudubon.org">wetlands@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>   |
| IAWP/Busy Beavers Stewardship Coordinator | Emma Narotzky<br><a href="mailto:wetlands@sacajaweaudubon.org">wetlands@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>  |
| Book Club                                 | Elisabeth Swanson & Hilary Johnson<br><a href="mailto:bookclub@sacajaweaudubon.org">bookclub@sacajaweaudubon.org</a>   |
| Newsletter Design                         | Tamara Knappenberger<br><a href="mailto:tkknappenberger@gmail.com">tkknappenberger@gmail.com</a>   |



**SACAJAWEA**  
AUDUBON  
SOCIETY

**INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE**

**UPDATE: JANUARY 2025**

THE WETLAND PRESERVATION PROJECT (WPP) was initiated to accomplish Sacajawea Audubon Society's mission to protect and restore increasingly rare wetland and riparian habitats in our region, and to provide educational opportunities and enjoyment for generations to come. The IAWP is the first of our wetland protection projects.

## "PROTECTING WETLANDS FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE"



**W**orld Wetlands Day is celebrated each year on February 2nd to raise awareness about wetlands. This day also marks the anniversary of the Convention on Wetlands, which was adopted as an international treaty in 1971.

Wetlands are critically important ecosystems that contribute to biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, freshwater availability, world economies and more. Nearly 90% of the world's wetlands have been degraded since the 1700s, and we are losing wetlands three times faster than forests.

It is urgent that we raise national and global awareness about wetlands in order to reverse their rapid loss and encourage actions to conserve and restore them.

World Wetlands Day is the ideal time to increase people's understanding of these critically important ecosystems.

We start off **World Wetlands Day** with a **special presentation on January, 30 at 6pm at the Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture.**

**Then celebrate with us on Sunday, February 2 at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve** for a tour and hot cocoa. **Meet at the Kingfisher Pavilion at 1 PM.** Depending on conditions we may use snow shoes. Dress for the weather. If this will be your first visit to the IAWP, contact [wetlands@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:wetlands@sacajaweaaudubon.org) for more directions.

## DAM IT: PARTNERING WITH BEAVERS TO HEAL THE PLANET with Ben Goldfarb, Environmental Journalist & Author

Gallatin Valley Earth Day Presentation



**B**en Goldfarb, reveals that our modern conception of a healthy ecosystem is wrong, distorted by the fur trade that once eliminated millions of beavers from North America's waterways. The consequences of losing beavers were profound: ponds drained, wetlands dried up, and species from salmon to swans lost vital habitat. Today, a

growing coalition of "Beaver Believers"—including scientists, farmers, and passionate citizens—recognizes that ecosystems with beavers are far healthier than those without them.

**Thursday, January 16, 2025**

**Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture, Bozeman**

**6 pm: Reception in the Ballroom**

- Free food & drink
- Book signing with Ben Goldfarb for *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter*. Copies of the book will be made available at the event by Country Bookshelf.
- Info tables from sponsors
- Silent auction –among the items to bid on will be SIMMS waders.

**7 pm: Talk in the Crawford Theater** with panel discussion & questions to follow

**FREE**

**In-person and Livestream**

**Register in advance** to receive the link for the live stream (and/or to receive the recording) at:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_qS1yd0A-SpiB7P6bXmQ7Iw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qS1yd0A-SpiB7P6bXmQ7Iw)

**World Wetlands Day**  
2 February 2025



**Protecting wetlands for our common future**



# Our 2025 Montana Legislative Session: Your Guide to Being Involved

By Beth Madden

January 6, 2025 will kick off the 69th session of the Montana Legislature. Did you know that Montana is one of only ten states that have citizen legislatures? That means that our legislature is made up of citizens that have other jobs rather than simply being politicians. Most states have professional legislatures – they meet full-time, pay members a salary, and employ staff. In contrast, citizen legislatures meet only part-time, have members that have other jobs, and have smaller staffs.

This is why our citizen legislators especially need our input. During the fast-moving, 90-day session, they must work hard to understand the implications of dozens of new bills at a time. They can't be instant experts in all issues, and information from their constituents and lobbyists help them gauge important aspects of proposed legislation.

For many Sacajawea Audubon Society members, conservation issues are vital. Please consider making your voice heard on issues that are dear to you this session. It is important, and easier than ever, to be informed and share your expertise and opinions with our legislators as they study important bills. Luckily, many of our statewide conservation groups are actively involved in the legislature, and they provide email "Action Alerts" as bills arise, with a synthesis of the issues and how best to comment. **Sign up to receive these legislative alerts and most of the work will be done for you!**

Here is a sample of some of the most engaged statewide conservation groups – they welcome our participation, so sign up for action alerts today. You don't have to be a member. (Of course, many other groups will be focusing on education, healthcare, human rights, and more – track what interests you.)



**Montana Audubon** - join their network for legislative alerts: <https://mtaudubon.org/conservation-policy/action-alert/>

**Montana Environmental Information Council (MEIC)** - sign up for action alerts: <https://meic.org/take-action/>

**Northern Plains Resource Council (NPRC)** - sign up for weekly legislative bulletins, with action alerts (at bottom of this page) <https://northernplains.org/legislature/>

**Montana Wildlife Federation (MWF)** - sign up for action emails at the very bottom of the homepage: <https://montanawildlife.org/>

Weary of sending emails? You can easily call and leave messages on bills through the switchboard at the Capital: 406-444-4800 (add this to your phone contacts). Once you give your name, home address, and phone number, you will be in their system and can call repeatedly and quickly leave messages on bills. You can leave a phone message for up to five legislators at a time or for an entire committee, which is very handy.

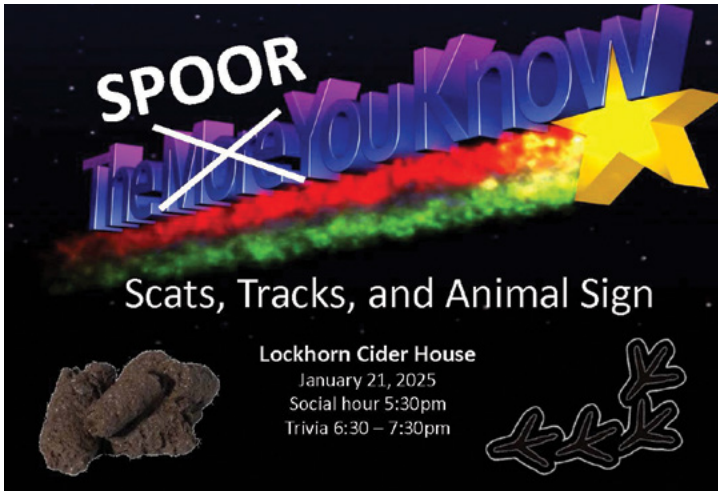
One bright spot this session is that there will not be a supermajority of one party, so everyone will have a more equitable seat at the table. In order for bills to move forward and be successful, it will be necessary to have more healthy discourse and compromise than what we saw in the last session, when a supermajority of one party ruled.

Like following a favorite sports team, it can be fun to nerd out during the session and closely follow the progress of bills that interest you. The Legislature's Bill Explorer <https://bills.legmt.gov/> puts all that at your fingertips – results of hearings, how committee members or individuals voted on a bill - it is all there. Get involved in the process. Explore all this and more at <https://www.legmt.gov/>. It's no doubt going to be a long winter!

## ❄️ MARK YOUR CALENDAR ❄️

- ❑ **January 1: Renew Your 2025 SAS Membership**
- ❑ **January 4: Final Christmas Bird Count**
- ❑ **January 13: SAS monthly program meeting: *Origin and Evolution of Birds* with MOR's Ashley Hall**
- ❑ **January 16: Ben Goldfarb author of *Eager, The Surprising Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter* at Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture**
- ❑ **January 21: IAWP Trivia at Lockhorn Cider**
- ❑ **January 30: Presentation *World Wetland Day* at Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture**
- ❑ **February 2: World Wetland Day tour of the IAWP**
- ❑ **February 10: SAS monthly program meeting**
- ❑ **February 14 – 17: Great Backyard Bird Count**
- ❑ **March 10: SAS monthly program meeting**
- ❑ **March 25 – May 17: Master Naturalist Class**
- ❑ **May 16 – 19: Sweetgrass Prairie Birding Tour**
- ❑ **May 24 – 26: Red Rocks Tour**
- ❑ **June 24: Start of Wetland Master Naturalist Class**

## The First Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Trivia Night of 2025!



**N**ow that's a real scatty thing to say! This month join us to see how well you can interpret evidence about what wildlife has been around the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP) and other haunts by all those tracks, scats, and other signs the critters leave behind (including from their behinds).

**Tuesday, January 21**

**5:30 PM – Social Hour | 6:30 PM – Trivia begins**

**Trivia is free, followed by a raffle. Enter to win a prize basket and benefit the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve. Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20.**

**Lockhorn Cider House – 21 S. Wallace, Bozeman**

**Great News for the New Year! IAWP Trivia Nights at Lockhorn will continue to be held on the third Tuesday evening of every month in 2025!**

## This Year's Christmas Bird Count Has Been a Success!

**The Bozeman Count recorded 71 species!**

**On Saturday, January 4th, Tom Forwood will lead the final CBC of the season at Ruby Valley.** To participate please contact Tom at [tjfishing75@gmail.com](mailto:tjfishing75@gmail.com) or call 406-570-6432. Email preferred.

Watch for the complete report in the February newsletter.



*Virginia Rail at Gallatin Regional Park. Photo: Andrew Guttenberg.*

## MASTER NATURALIST COURSE WITH CEDAR MATHERS-WINN



**March 25– May 17, 2025**

**M**aster Naturalists are trained in the ecology and natural history of the local landscape, including geology, plants, animals, fungi, and the connections between them. The Master Naturalist course goes beyond basic identification of organisms to explore the lives and stories that reveal how even the smallest creatures are fascinating and essential to life in our shared ecosystems. Training includes foundational knowledge, local natural history of the large and small, traditional scientific tools and techniques, and practices utilized by Charles Darwin, Aldo Leopold, and generations of naturalists before them. Master Naturalists also join a community of fun and inquisitive nature enthusiasts, and deepen their own personal connection with the landscape we call home.

Through classroom and outdoor lessons, this 8-week course will deepen your experience and understanding of the fascinating landscape we call home. You will explore the local plants, mammals, birds, geology, and more. You will build a deeper connection with the land, meet other nature-enthusiasts, and join a state-wide community of Master Naturalists! This course is only offered twice a year.

Register online at: [https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_engine/s/R2hewdAX-6zQDhBCsbv7tg](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/R2hewdAX-6zQDhBCsbv7tg)

**The Wetland Master Naturalist Course** will start on June 24, 2025. Look for registration information in the February newsletter.

## BRIDGER BOWL SKI PASS WINNERS!

Congratulations to Mindy Visser and Melanie Maganias who each won a Bridger Bowl Season Ski Pass supporting the Bridger Mountain Raptor Migration Project.

Thank you to Bridger Bowl for the generous donation of these two season passes and for diligently supporting this project since its inception. Thank you to all who purchased raffle tickets! All funds are used directly for continuing management of this important project.





## BOB MOORE LEAVES A LEGACY OF BIRD LOVERS

**B**ob was a dedicated, long-time member of Sacajawea Audubon Society. He served as the president from 1989-1991, while his wife Robin, produced the newsletter for ten years. He led many SAS sponsored field trips, was instrumental in providing wonderful program speakers, and facilitated numerous conservation projects, including Kirk Hill and East Gallatin Recreation Area (now Glen Lake Rotary Park).

“Bob was an ideal professor. He gave me a gift that I am still using 35 years after I took his ornithology class. What an impact he had. He was gracious and patient and had the art of teaching honed so that I still use his methods of birding so many, many years later. It’s a special person who is able to teach and have a life-long impact on others. Thank you, Bob. You were one of the quiet, great few.”  
– Peggy Olliff

“There are perhaps hundreds of us whose lives have been enriched because we took Bob Moore’s Field Ornithology course at some point over the last several decades.

“Bob’s wife, Robin Moore, recently shared that, over the years, when running into past students, they would make a point of telling Bob that his class had changed their lives. I am, and many of you reading this, are among those of Bob Moore’s students whose lives were also changed.

“His kindness and unwavering patience created a safe environment for asking questions and practicing skills. He provided opportunities for observing birds in different habitats and for learning bird vocalizations, behavioral and physical traits. It is often Bob’s voice that I hear when recalling hints and details while sorting out a bird’s ID. I feel most grateful that I learned from Bob skills to support a life-long passion for birding that gives me great joy.

“I remember with gratitude and fondness the time I got to spend with this remarkable teacher and friend.” – Janet Winnie

### Introducing the First Recipient of the Sacajawea Audubon Society Bob Moore Scholarship

**Anna Freundlich** is studying the response of the vegetation, pollinator, and avian community to an herbicide application (Indaziflam) in the Charles M. Russell wildlife refuge in Eastern Montana. Indaziflam is a biosynthesis inhibitor that prevents seedling germination within the top few centimeters of treated soil. Land managers are increasingly eager to use



*Bob Moore.*

this herbicide to treat areas overrun with invasive annual grasses, as other herbicide treatments have limited long-term efficacy due to seedling regeneration from the seed bank. They are hopeful that this herbicide can effectively kill invasive annual grasses and aid in restoring sagebrush habitat for native plants, pollinators, and birds.

Originally from Ohio, Anna is glad this project brought her to beautiful Montana. When not doing research, she likes to do ceramics, read, and loves to spend time outdoors birding or botanizing.

“Thank you again for your support, I am truly honored to be the first recipient of the Sacajawea Audubon Society Bob Moore scholarship.” – Anna Freundlich



*Awarding of the first Sacajawea Audubon Society Bob Moore Scholarship in November 2024. Robin Moore, Anna Freundlich, Janet Winnie, Frank Marchak, Loreene Reid. Photo: courtesy of MSU.*

### Scholarship info

To honor Bob’s teaching and conservation legacy, SAS established the Sacajawea Audubon Society Bob Moore Scholarship Fund to be awarded annually to a graduate student in the MSU Ecology Department to support their research on avian communities and conservation in Montana.

**To make a contribution to the scholarship fund**, contact the MSU Alumni Foundation at 406-994-2053, [gifts@musaf.org](mailto:gifts@musaf.org), or mail a check to: MSU Alumni Foundation, P.O. Box 172750, Bozeman, MT 59717, and note in the memo line the fund name.

## REMEMBERING DEDICATED SAS MEMBER Richard C. Wolcott

by Robin Wolcott

Richard always said: “Remember, these ARE the good ol’ days.” And indeed they were – for him and all who had the pleasure of associating with him. Richard was born in San Francisco, graduated from UC Berkeley, became a rural property real estate appraiser then went on to become the president of the National Association of Appraisers. He eventually moved to Sacramento where he met Robin, whom he married in 1979. In the early 90s, they moved to the Upper Ruby Valley in Montana. A slow day of fishing on the Madison River peaked their interest in birds and birding. Since that memorable day, they have pursued birds in ALL the counties of Montana, as well as from Alaska to Argentina and from Scotland to Africa. They have discovered and reported rare birds in many western states, but their crowning achievement was in locating a Crescent-chested Warbler in AZ (a Mexican species) for only the 6th sighting in North America. They moved to Bozeman in 1996 and immediately joined Sacajawea Audubon Society. They have been field trip leaders for the chapter ever



Richard C. Wolcott

since they led that first trip to Mission Creek for the state birding festival in Livingston in 2004. They took on the task of compiler for the Ennis Christmas Bird Count in 2009, reviving an important count area for our state. And when they weren't leading field trips, they busted a bunch of burdock on behalf of the birds!

Richard didn't think of himself as a birder, but rather called himself a “birder's assistant.” He drove the car, carried the scope and helped others find the birds.

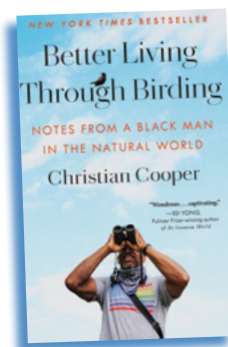
He was a great spotter, a feat that earned him a cap that read GOOD SPOT!

After a long life, Richard Wolcott passed peacefully in his sleep early Saturday morning October 5, 2024 at the age of 94 with Robin by his side, as always. “Richie” was a dear friend, a delightful companion, and a wonderful husband. May his soul fly on the wings of the two Golden Eagles that soared overhead the afternoon of his passing. He will be greatly missed!

## SAS BOOK CLUB NEWS – JANUARY

Christian Cooper has lived an extraordinary life. His book *Better Living through Birding* allows us to follow his journey from an early age. He built his first bird feeder at age 10 through a 4-H program and was enthralled when a Red-winged Blackbird immediately appeared to feed. At that thrilling moment he believed he had discovered a new species of crow with crimson wing bars! Cooper's schoolteacher parents nurtured their son's interest in birds, and he quickly acquired expert birders as mentors during forays on Long Island. During his undergraduate days at Harvard, he became President of the Ornithological Club. Later, while balancing careers as a science writer and editor in the biomedical sciences as well as a comics writer and editor for Marvel Comics, Cooper continued to bird, often hopping on the subway to look for birds in nearby Central Park. His dedication resulted in his appointment as a member of the Board of NYC Audubon.

One morning in May 2022, Cooper was observing migratory birds resting in the park. A chance encounter with a woman walking her dogs resulted in her accusations that Cooper, a black man, was threatening her and her dog. The woman called the police, and Cooper's recorded video of the original encounter went viral. The authorities and the public



overwhelmingly took his side. Shortly after the incident, National Geographic invited Cooper to create and star in a series called Extraordinary Birder. The series won a Daytime Emmy award in 2024.

Cooper is a gay man, and his life shows a continuous thread of social activism on behalf of LGBTQ people. He says that the dual challenge of being gay and black in America today actually strengthened his affinity with birds and the natural world.

**This first Book Club meeting of 2025 will be held January 15th at Hope Lutheran Church from 6:30 to 7:45 pm.** You can find us in Room 123 eating treats and animatedly discussing this month's selection- Christian Cooper's *Better Living Through Birding: Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World* (2023). We are easygoing bibliophiles and love to meet others who share our love of birds and books. If you would like to join the meeting remotely, contact Elisabeth Swanson (406-570-8325; [elsswa@gmail.com](mailto:elsswa@gmail.com)) before the meeting.

To learn more about Christian Cooper, view the following interview by the New York Times with fellow author and bird enthusiast Amy Tan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qcBW3Urjkh>





**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's Monthly Newsletter** is available electronically to all Sacajawea Audubon Society members, September through May.

**Deadline for article submission** is the 10th of the month preceding the month the articles will appear. Send articles electronically to [newsletter@sacajaweaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@sacajaweaudubon.org).

**Change of Address:** If you have a change of address or are away, please notify [membership@sacajaweaudubon.org](mailto:membership@sacajaweaudubon.org). Undeliverable mailed newsletters are returned to us for an extra fee.

Find more at the **Sacajawea Audubon Society** website at [sacajaweaudubon.org](http://sacajaweaudubon.org)

## SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

*Individual or Family | January – December 2025*

**Basic Membership** ..... \$25

**Supporting Membership** ..... \$50  
*(Supporting local conservation & education projects)*

**Student Membership** ..... \$10  
*(College & High School Students)*

**Additional Donation \$** \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridger Raptor Study                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland Campaign   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Story Mill Park Bird Feeding Station | <input type="checkbox"/> Wherever is Needed |

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Street or PO Box)*

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