



# 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 & Membership Meeting: Monday, September 8th*

## **45 Years Counting Migrating Raptors in the West: What Have We Learned?**

**with Steve Hoffman, founder of HawkWatch International**



K Dudgeon



Nick Belgiano



K Dudgeon

**J**oin us as we explore the expansive raptor migration monitoring network that has been established in the western U.S. over the past 45 years. Studies from these monitoring projects have yielded important scientific information.

Founder of HawkWatch International, Steve Hoffman will chronicle these ambitious efforts. Research has yielded important scientific information about the health and population trends of more than a dozen raptor species that migrate throughout western North America. Enroute from northern breeding grounds, many originate in Alaska and northern Canada, to spend the non-breeding period in more southern climes as far south as Argentina! These apex aerial predators serve as valuable indicators of large-scale ecosystem health and change.

In addition, Steve will summarize the genesis and key findings of these monitoring efforts, emphasizing the potential value of

these long-term data sets for evaluating future climate change impacts on not only our majestic raptors, but also on overall ecosystem health and biodiversity.

**The in-person meeting will be held Monday, September 8, 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 [sacajaweaudubon.org/program](https://sacajaweaudubon.org/program). Attendees—whether in person or virtual—are encouraged to share their bird sightings at this and every monthly program.

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 Chris Nixon at [programs@sacajaweaudubon.org](mailto:programs@sacajaweaudubon.org).



**Stephen Hoffman** has devoted his entire 45+ year career to wildlife conservation. He served 10 years in government service, primarily as an Endangered Species Biologist for the US Fish & Wildlife Service in the American Southwest. In 1986 Steve founded **HawkWatch International**. He has authored and co-authored more than 50 publications/manuscripts on raptor migration, ecology/conservation

and endangered species management. Steve continues to coordinate the local **Bridger Raptor Migration Project** through Bozeman-based Sacajawea Audubon Society. He also runs his own nature-based tour company, Merlin Birding & Nature Tours, LLC, headquartered in Bozeman. Steve has given dozens of public presentations on the identification, natural history, migration and conservation of North American raptors. In 1979 he received his Master's degree in Wildlife Ecology from Utah State University.

## A MESSAGE *from* SAS PRESIDENT, CHRIS NIXON



It is unbelievable that Fall is knocking at the door. With it comes some great opportunities for you to engage with Sacajawea Audubon Society. See if you can squeeze your name onto the short-list to go on one of the two fall field trips. Each is limited to 10 participants (*See page 8*).

The Annual **Bridger Raptor Fest** will take place this year on October 4 & 5. The event always makes for a great family and friends outing. Learn about raptors (even see live ones up close) and engage the kiddos in fun activities. For those more adventuresome and svelt– take the 2000 ft. climb to the top of the ridge and help count the migrating raptors from the observation platform. But first attend the September **SAS membership meeting** on **Monday, Sept. 8**. At this meeting you'll learn about all the raptor hot spots and raptor count locations as Steve Hoffman updates us on what is going on at these important observation sites. I'm sure Steve will throw in a few raptors to get you up to speed for what you are likely to see raptor-wise this season. (*See page 1*)

Check out *page 5* to learn what has been happening at the **Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve**. During this year's BioBlitz we met we met our goals of exceeding the number or observations and number of species in past years.

Get out and enjoy the dwindling days of this summer and watch for all the amazing migrants that will be passing through the area. Before we know it, we are going to need snowshoes and skis to get about in our great outdoors.

### *The Power of the Towers:*

#### MOTUS PROJECT



Thanks to everyone that contributed to our **Motus Tower Project** helping us reach our goal! We are moving forward with purchasing equipment, meeting with landowners, and will start erecting the towers this fall. Look for updates in the October newsletter.

## SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

### Officers

President	Chris Nixon <a href="mailto:pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org">pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Vice President	Doug McSpadden <a href="mailto:vicepres@sacajaweaaudubon.org">vicepres@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Treasurer	Loreene Reid <a href="mailto:treas@sacajaweaaudubon.org">treas@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Secretary	Mikaela Howie <a href="mailto:sec@sacajaweaaudubon.org">sec@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>

### Board Members

Aaron Clausen	<a href="mailto:aaronclausen@sacajaweaaudubon.org">aaronclausen@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
John Edwards	<a href="mailto:johnedwards@sacajaweaaudubon.org">johnedwards@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Ben Goodheart	<a href="mailto:bengoodheart@sacajaweaaudubon.org">bengoodheart@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Frank Marchak	<a href="mailto:frankm@bozemanwetlands.org">frankm@bozemanwetlands.org</a>
Halle Neinhaus	<a href="mailto:halleneinhaus@sacajaweaaudubon.org">halleneinhaus@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Vicki Saab	<a href="mailto:vickisaab@sacajaweaaudubon.org">vickisaab@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Ken Sinay	<a href="mailto:kensinay@sacajaweaaudubon.org">kensinay@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Emma Narotzky	<a href="mailto:emmanarotzky@sacajaweaaudubon.org">emmanarotzky@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Bret Davis	<a href="mailto:bretdavis@sacajaweaaudubon.org">bretdavis@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>

### Activity Leaders

Education Chair	<b>Open Position</b>
Conservation Co-Chairs	Paulette Epple <a href="mailto:conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org">conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a> Lou Ann Harris <a href="mailto:louann@sacajaweaaudubon.org">louann@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Field Trips, Bird Sightings	John Parker <a href="mailto:birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org">birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Hospitality	<b>Open Position</b>
Membership	Loreene Reid <a href="mailto:membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org">membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Newsletter	Amy Crowder and Chris Nixon <a href="mailto:newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org">newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Programs	<b>Open Position</b>
Website	Lou Ann Harris & Doug McSpadden <a href="mailto:webmaster@sacajaweaaudubon.org">webmaster@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Social Media/ Communications	Lou Ann Harris and Mikaela Howie <a href="mailto:socialmedia@sacajaweaaudubon.org">socialmedia@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Book Club	Elisabeth Swanson & Hilary Johnson <a href="mailto:bookclub@sacajaweaaudubon.org">bookclub@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
Newsletter Design	Amy Crowder <a href="mailto:amy@vandycreative.com">amy@vandycreative.com</a>

### Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Board Members

President	Frank Marchak, <a href="mailto:frankm@bozemanwetlands.org">frankm@bozemanwetlands.org</a>
Treasurer	Loreene Reid, <a href="mailto:loreener@bozemanwetlands.org">loreener@bozemanwetlands.org</a>
Board Members	Robin Hompish, <a href="mailto:robinh@bozemanwetlands.org">robinh@bozemanwetlands.org</a> Billy Burton, <a href="mailto:billyb@bozemanwetlands.org">billyb@bozemanwetlands.org</a> Bill Simkins, <a href="mailto:bills@bozemanwetlands.org">bills@bozemanwetlands.org</a>
Stewardship Intern & Busy Beaver Coordinator	Morgan Anderson <a href="mailto:morgana@bozemanwetlands.org">morgana@bozemanwetlands.org</a>

# SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY LAUNCHES 34TH FALL SEASON RAPTOR MIGRATION COUNTS ATOP BRIDGER BOWL

**T**he Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) celebrates the start of the 34th consecutive annual Bridger Raptor Migration Count. Isabel Masi, Oskar Robinson and Emily Quillen have been recruited as our three official, season-long observers for the fall 2025 migration season. They will be documenting all raptors migrating south along the crest of the Bridger Ridge (directly above Bridger Bowl Ski Area) from 27 August through 31 October. All three individuals have tremendous passion and enthusiasm for raptor research and conservation, and SAS is thrilled to have them on board throughout the 2025 raptor migration season!



*Observers watching migrating raptors and helping collect count data from a platform atop the Bridger Ridge.*

2 weeks of October). However, it is noteworthy that autumn migration counts of Golden Eagles at this and other western sites have shown significant declines during the 30+ years of consistent, standardized counting, particularly from 2000-2010 and in more recent years.

The cause(s) of this long-term Golden Eagle decline are not fully understood. Our Bridger findings, as well as several other long-term migration counts conducted elsewhere in the western U.S., have inspired in-depth Golden Eagle research. This research is primarily conducted by the US Fish & Wildlife Service across the western United States and Alaska.

## Raptor Viewing Tips for the Bridgers

The best overall raptor viewing for a variety of migrant raptors atop the Bridgers is from mid-September through mid-October. The general public is invited to join Isabel, Emily and Oskar to witness one of nature's most spectacular phenomena as these majestic birds migrate south over the Bridgers!

**Additional volunteer observers are always welcome**, and certainly needed to help SAS conduct these counts. For those in good physical condition, please note that it is a 1.5-2-hour hike to the observation point (2,000-ft. elevation gain). **Anyone wishing to volunteer, please contact Project Coordinator Steve Hoffman** at [swhoffman0322@gmail.com](mailto:swhoffman0322@gmail.com) or [406-461-5714](tel:406-461-5714). Folks are welcome to visit [hawkcount.org](http://hawkcount.org) or [sacajaweaaudubon.org](http://sacajaweaaudubon.org) to obtain the daily count totals. We look forward to seeing many of you at the Bridger Lookout this season!!

## Project Funding

It is always a challenge to find support for our long-term Bridger raptor population monitoring efforts. The 2025 budget for this important work is \$27,000. **Contributions in any amount are welcome, and appreciated!!** (Please send your check to: Sacajawea Audubon, P.O. Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 59771 or donate online at [sacajaweaaudubon.org](http://sacajaweaaudubon.org) – THANK YOU!!)



*Pictured L-R: Isabel Masi, Oskar Robinson and Emily Quillen have been recruited to serve as SAS's official, season-long observers for the fall 2025 migration season*

## The primary goals of the Bridger Project are to:

- Assess the status and long-term trends of Golden Eagles and other migrant raptor species using the autumn Bridger Mountain flyway, and
- To monitor landscape-level environmental health and change using these widespread, apex predators as valuable ecological barometers. SAS is partnering closely with Bridger Bowl Ski Area, U.S. Forest Service (Custer Gallatin National Forest), HawkWatch International (HWI) and a great many local contributors to continue this critically important, long-term project. HWI initiated these science-based, season-long counts in 1992, and SAS assumed primary responsibility for conducting these counts beginning in 2017.

A total of **18 raptor species** have been recorded using this flyway over the years of studies, including **Golden & Bald Eagles**, as well as many other raptor species. These migrants originate primarily from their breeding grounds throughout the Pacific Northwest, western Canada and Alaska. Over-winter destinations include a wide range of latitudes (varying by species and breeding origins), from the American Southwest and Mexico to Central and South America.

## Golden Eagle Count Trends

Autumn Golden Eagle counts in the Bridger Range have generally totaled from 1,000 to 1,800 per season, with up to 150 or more tallied in a single migration day (maximum Golden Eagle numbers are generally observed during the first





**SACAJAWEA**  
**AUDUBON**  
**SOCIETY**

# INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE UPDATE: SEPTEMBER 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.

## RAISE YOUR VOICE FOR WETLANDS

### *Your Comments are Needed – Bozeman City Commission to Vote on New Wetland Code*

**T**he Sacajawea Audubon Society has long been concerned about the loss of wetlands in the Bozeman area and the Gallatin Watershed. When SAS received the donation of property for the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve from Ileana Indreland and Mike Delaney, our Wetland Preservation Project Committee saw a great opportunity to inform the Bozeman community and Commissioners on the values of urban wetlands.

Currently, regulations allow mitigation of wetlands impacted and destroyed within Bozeman to occur in the distant watershed of the Jefferson River. The donation of the Indreland property has allowed SAS to start a **local mitigation bank**. Our objective is that wetland losses within the Gallatin Watershed are not a given when impacted by development within Bozeman.

Now the **Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve** has become a reality – the Indreland Audubon Wetland Board is in the final stages of establishing the **Sacajawea Wetland Mitigation Bank**. This provides the opportunity for wetlands to be mitigated here inside Bozeman rather than suffering loss of those wetland functions only to having them mitigated in a distant watershed. Now that there will be a local option for mitigation, the **City of Bozeman is proposing to require that when wetlands are impacted within Bozeman, they are mitigated within the Gallatin watershed.**



**Bozeman City Commission  
public hearing regarding  
wetland code is scheduled for  
September 9, 2025 at 6:00 PM**

This is huge for preserving the wetland benefits and water resources locally where these impacts are taking place.

A public hearing by the Bozeman City Commission will be held on the proposed updates to the Wetland Code at their meeting on September 9, 2025 at 6:00 PM. **Please take the opportunity to email, write, or call your City Commissioners** and let them know you support this local mitigation requirement for all wetlands in the Bozeman area whether they are jurisdictional or non-jurisdictional. Remind them of the benefits of wetlands; i.e. flood mitigation, subsurface water storage, stream cooling, wildlife habitat, and respite. We do not want to lose these vital wetland functions in our rapidly developing area.

Your help is critical to help finish this years-long effort by SAS. Please attend the September 9th Commission meeting. If you can't attend in person, please send an email or call to make your opinions known. The Commission knows the stance of the SAS Board and The Indreland Wetland Preserve Board. **YOUR opinions are what really matter. Let your voice be heard!**



*Morgan Anderson, Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Stewardship Intern picture with her horse Lupine.*

### *Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Stewardship Intern*

**M**y name is Morgan Anderson, I'm the Stewardship Intern at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve. I help coordinate events, restoration projects, and our wonderful Busy Beaver team. Originally, I lived on the westside of Michigan. I was drawn to Bozeman to study Fish & Wildlife Ecology and Management at Montana State University.

Ever since I was a young girl, I've had a deep love for conservation and spend as much time outdoors as I can. Some of my favorite activities include: hiking, birding, offroading, paddleboarding, and fishing. A few of my favorite birds are the **California Quail**, the **American Woodcock**, and, really, all ducks.



## Seven Earn Wetland Master Naturalist Certification



Erik Anderson, USFS instructs the Soil Science class

**S**even new **Wetland Master Naturalists** completed our second annual **SAS Montana Master Naturalist Program**. This wetland-focused master naturalist class covers various aspects of wetland ecology and environmental science, tailored to Montana's unique landscapes and ecological characteristics. The approach focuses on the natural science aspects of wetlands, with a concentration on the understanding of wetland ecology, hydrology, soils, plants, and wildlife. It covers topics that provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex ecological interactions that occur within these ecosystems, with an emphasis on scientific observation, analysis, and interpretation, and integrates field trips and hands-on activities.

The course includes 10 classes and three full day field trips. Each class is structured to last 2 hours, combining theoretical knowledge with practical, hands-on activities or field observations. Each topic had a subject matter expert drawn from local specialists, Montana University System, and the Society of Wetland Scientists. Certification requires attendance for 40 class hours, journaling, an interpretative presentation on a wetland topic of choice and 6 hours volunteer service.

### WE WANT TO THANK OUR INSTRUCTORS

**Connor Parrish,**  
*Trout Unlimited*

**Leah Swartz,**  
*MT Freshwater Partners*

**Ben Goodheart,**  
*Ecology Dept, MSU*

**Bryce Pease,**  
*Confluence Consulting*

**Rich McEldowney,**  
*Confluence Consulting*

**Erik Anderson,**  
*US Forest Service*

**John Edwards,**  
*Sacajawea Audubon Society*

**Hannah Cantu,**  
*Confluence Consulting*

**Bill Kleindl,**  
*Land Resources &*

*Environmental Sciences, MSU*

## 2025 BioBlitz A Great Success

**T**he Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve's 2025 BioBlitz was a great success. Over the course of twenty-four hours, participants made 557 observations and identified 222 species, with 21 observers contributing their time to community science.



Wilson's Snipe  
(*Gallinago delicata*)



Lesser Yellowlegs  
(*Tringa flavipes*)

This year's BioBlitz revealed some exciting findings. The **Blunt Knapweed Flower Weevil** (*Larinus obtusus*) was confirmed at the preserve, showcasing our progress in using biocontrols to manage invasive plants. We also found the **Canada Thistle Bud Weevil** (*Larinus carlinae*), the **Pale Beauty Moth** (*Campaea perlata*), **Dudley's Rush** (*Juncus dudleyi*), **Wilson's Snipe** (*Gallinago delicata*), **Lesser Yellowlegs** (*Tringa flavipes*), and so much more. Each new observation helps paint a clearer picture of the wetland's biodiversity and builds our long term conservation work.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our volunteers: Heleen Cox, Kevin Cox, Lucy Atwell, Loreene Reid, Frank Marchak, Jennifer Heiss, and Jacqueline Stanley. We especially recognize Allison Rognlie, who

contributed 146 observations, the most of any participant. Everyone's dedication and enthusiasm truly made this year's BioBlitz special.

We were honored to host Doug Smith as our keynote speaker at the Pre-Blitz Bonanza. His talk on the importance of citizen wildlife research was both inspiring and relevant to our work here at the preserve. If you missed the presentation or would like to rewatch it, the recording is now available at [bozemanwetlands.org](https://bozemanwetlands.org)

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and supported this year's BioBlitz. Together, we're building a stronger connection to our wetland and the remarkable life that lives there. We look forward to seeing you at future events!

**More news from Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve**  
**See Page 6**





Continued from page 5



## Beaver Workshop

**Saturday, September 20, 2025**

With **Claire Kirk, National Wildlife Federation  
Beaver Conflict Resolution Technician**

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Kingfisher Pavilion, Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve

**C**ome and explore the fascinating life of the beaver and learn about the benefits of beavers in riparian areas and urban environments. Beavers are a keystone species because they create and maintain wetland ecosystems that support a diverse array of plant and animal life. By slowing water flow and forming ponds, beavers create habitats for fish, amphibians, insects, and birds that would not otherwise thrive in fast-moving streams. By providing shelter and food for many species, they increase biodiversity.

## Mark Your Calendars!

We have several exciting events planned at the Preserve. On **September 10**, we'll host the **World Wildlife Fund Conference** for a service project morning at the wetlands. We invite other organizations or businesses interested in scheduling a service day to contact us at: [morgana@bozemanwetlands.org](mailto:morgana@bozemanwetlands.org).

The **Beaver Workshop** will be held on **September 20** at the Kingfisher Pavilion of the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve.

Our **Busy Beaver Rendezvous** will take place on **October 18**, where volunteers will help prepare the wetland for winter.

On **October 25**, join us for our family friendly **Spooky Stroll**, an evening walk through the preserve to watch beavers and corvids settling into their roosts.

**For more information, visit:**

[bozemanwetlands.org/events-calendar/](https://bozemanwetlands.org/events-calendar/)

The challenges that beavers face in urban ecosystems stem from conflicts with human infrastructure, habitat limitations, and management concerns. Beavers frequently block drainage systems, culverts, and stormwater channels, causing unintended flooding in roads, backyards, and agricultural fields. Their dam-building can lead to erosion and damage to property, bridges, and other urban infrastructure. **Register for the workshop at [Bozemanwetlands.org](https://bozemanwetlands.org).**

*Claire Kirk is the Beaver Conflict Resolution Technician with the National Wildlife Federation, working in Region 3. Claire will provide an introduction to the Beaver Conflict Resolution Program and discuss options for dealing with beavers.*



*If the Great Gray Owl's Arctic habitat continues warming at the current rate, it will become unlivable, leaving few places farther north to which the species can retreat.*

## Audubon Action Alert!

### PROTECT BIRDS AND PEOPLE FROM HARMFUL GREENHOUSE GASES

**T**he Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed **eliminating the "Endangerment Finding"** that allows the agency to limit climate pollution from major sources like power plants, oil and gas infrastructure, and cars and trucks under the Clean Air Act. If the finding is eliminated, it could lead to the removal of emission limits, increasing risks to birds, human health, and our environment.

Urge the EPA to uphold the decades of well-established scientific consensus that allows the agency to set emission limits on greenhouse gases and preserve life-saving regulations.

**The EPA is accepting public input on the proposal to eliminate the Endangerment Finding until Monday, September 22.**

<https://act.audubon.org/a/epa-endangerment-finding-2025> Visit the provided link and Audubon will deliver your comment to the EPA, and it will become part of the public record.



# BIRD NOTES

by John Parker

I hope everyone has had a good summer, with time to enjoy the outdoors and some memorable birds. The spring migration passed too quickly as always. This year during the spring migration and early summer, there weren't too many especially unusual birds.

The one big exception to that, was the **Barn Owl** that swooped through Josiah Kiehl's Three Forks yard the morning of May 24th, coming so close that it gave him quite a start. Following the mobbing crows, magpies, and other birds, Josiah was able to find the owl buried deep in a blue spruce where it went to roost for the day. This is only one of about five sightings for a Barn Owl in southwestern Montana.

The bird of the summer in this corner of Montana was the **Hooded Oriole**, that showed up in Claudia and Ken Regan's yard near Four Corners. They first noticed the oriole on August 2nd and it continued coming to their hummingbird feeder and jelly dish until August 10. This adult non-breeding male Hooded Oriole represents only the fifth record for the species in the state. While primarily attracted to the feeder, the oriole was also finding numerous insect prey in the dense and diverse foliage surrounding the Regan's house. This is an excellent example of what's possible on a property that has been landscaped with birds and other wildlife in mind.



*The bird of the summer in this corner of Montana - a Hooded Oriole, spotted in Claudia and Ken Regan's yard near Four Corners.*  
Photo: Ken Regan

Up until the 1970's **Black-billed Cuckoos**

were a regular breeding bird along the lower elevation river corridors in this area. Since that time Black-billed Cuckoos have suffered dramatic population

declines, and with those declines the breeding range has contracted to the point where cuckoos are difficult to find anywhere in Montana. So, it was exciting news that several Black-billed Cuckoos were detected in this area. The first cuckoo to be heard this year was on a private ranch along the Madison River southeast of Three Forks on June 25th. Another cuckoo was detected calling next to the Shields River south of Clyde Park the following day. Two days later Nate Peterson heard yet another Black-billed Cuckoo calling from the dense riparian area south of Dailey Lake in Paradise Valley. This cuckoo remained in the same area till at least July 13th. Many people were able to see and hear this bird during this period, and one group of birders thought they heard a second cuckoo on July 4th. Finally, Linda and Ray Forrest were hearing a cuckoo calling below their house along Deep Creek in Paradise Valley, from July 23 to the 27th.

During much of the month of July, a wholly leucistic **Black-billed Magpie** was frequenting James Martin's yard a couple of miles east of Bozeman.

And speaking of leucistic birds, the leucistic **Evening Grosbeak** that was featured in this past March's newsletter is really getting around. This distinctive grosbeak was seen near Hyalite Canyon on May 5th and 6th, then amazingly it showed up at the upper end of Yankee Jim Canyon near Gardiner on May 17th, and once again returned to south Bozeman by May 24. Now, in mid-August, it is back to some feeders near Leverich Canyon after being seen again near Hyalite Canyon.



*In July a wholly leucistic Black-billed Magpie was observed frequenting James Martin's yard just east of Bozeman. Photo: James Martin*

# SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY FALL MIGRATION FIELD TRIPS

## THREE FORKS - HEADWATERS STATE PARK

Saturday September 6, Three Forks – Headwaters State Park

Meet in the Three Forks area at 8:30 am

*\*Meet-up location to be determined by the trip leader.*

Late August/early September is the peak of fall migration with an amazing diversity of birds passing through Montana. This field trip will take advantage of the many birding opportunities in the greater Three Forks and Headwaters State Park areas. This trip will last until early afternoon, so bring a lunch and anything else you may need for a day in the field. A scope could be helpful if you have one. Bring your enthusiasm and your flexibility as the birding locations could change due to varying conditions.

**Participants limited to 10.**

**To reserve a spot on the trip or for more information, please contact the trip leader.**

**Trip Leader:** Josiah Kiehl 406-539-6832 [josiah.kiehl@gmail.com](mailto:josiah.kiehl@gmail.com)

## HARRISON RESERVOIR

Saturday, September 13, 2024

Meet at 7:45 am at the Museum of the Rockies.

Carpool and leave at 8 am.

The emphasis of this trip will be on waterfowl and shorebirds, while exploring all the shorelines and other habitats around Harrison Reservoir. September is the peak of the fall migration, so we will likely be making other stops on the way to and from Harrison Reservoir to look for other migrants. This trip will last until late afternoon, so bring a lunch and anything else you may need for a day in the field. Scopes will be especially useful on this trip, as many of the birds will be distant.

**Participants limited to 10**

**To reserve a spot on the trip or for more information please contact the trip leader.**

**Trip Leader:** John Parker 406-586-5863 [conundrumjp@gmail.com](mailto:conundrumjp@gmail.com)

## SEPTEMBER BOOK CLUB NEWS

Welcome to another year of reading about nature, conservation, the environment and of course BIRDS! We meet from September through April, taking the month of December off to reduce stress over the holiday season. Hope Lutheran Church, Room 123 is our meeting place but you can also join us online from 6:30 pm to 7:45 pm. To join us online please notify Elisabeth Swanson (406) 570-8325, [elsswa@gmail.com](mailto:elsswa@gmail.com) or Hilary Johnson (406) 599-1446, [ralphhilary@gmail.com](mailto:ralphhilary@gmail.com).

### SAS BOOK CLUB SCHEDULE FOR 2025

**Sept 17, 2025**

**Duet: Our Journey in Song with the Northern Mockingbird**  
~ by Phillip Hoose (2022)

**October 15, 2025**

**Theodore Roosevelt & the Bison Restoration on the Great Plains**

~ by Keith Aune & Glenn Plumb (2019)

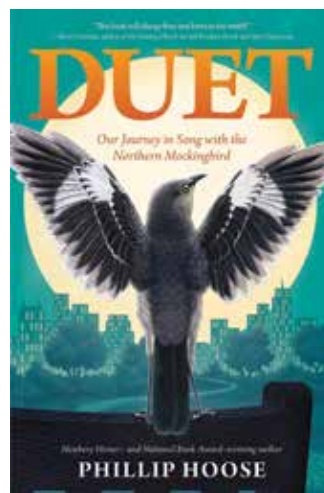
*\*Our own John Mugaas will host this session with author Keith Aune*

**Nov 19, 2025**

**The Golden Spruce**

~ by John Vaillant (2005)

**December 2025 - No Book Club meeting this month**



### DUET: OUR JOURNEY IN SONG WITH THE NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

Our book selection for September is a lively book about Northern Mockingbirds, **Duet: Our Journey in Song with the Northern Mockingbird** by Phillip Hoose (2022). Duet is the story of the impactful partnership between humans and mockingbirds both scientifically and culturally over the centuries,

written by award-winning nonfiction powerhouse Phil Hoose. The Northern Mockingbird's song—a loud, bright, liquid sampling of musical notes and phrases—has made it a beloved companion and the official bird of five states. Many of our favorite songs and poems feature mockingbirds. Native Americans, who revered the mockingbird, passed down myths and legends featuring the bird, often teaching humans to speak.

The mockingbird's ability to replicate other bird songs and sing fragments of those songs for hours on end, day and night, brought it close to extirpation in the early 1900's. Too many had been trapped, sold and caged. The book explains how the mockingbird's fate was reversed and its status today. Full color photographs of the mockingbird in action and reproductions of early illustrations amplify the engaging narrative.



## SAS PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS HOST FALL EVENTS



### YELLOWSTONE RIVER CLEAN UP WITH MONTANA FRESH WATER PARTNERS

Saturday, September 13 • Sacajawea Park, Livingston, MT  
9:00 am - 4:00 pm, barbeque to follow

**J**oin **Montana Freshwater Partners** for the Annual Yellowstone River Cleanup. Help keep the beloved Yellowstone River clean after another amazing summer season. Whether you're floating the river or walking its banks, there's a way for everyone to get involved. Pitch in to remove trash from the river and fishing access sites throughout Paradise Valley; then stick around to celebrate with food, local beer, and raffle prizes.

### BOZEMAN TO HOST STIBITZ-WILSON AWARDS CONNECTING TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNITIES

Tuesday, September 26 • The Ellen Theatre, Bozeman, MT

5:00 pm, Free and Open to the Public

**O**n September 26, the **American Computer & Robotics Museum** will present its annual Stibitz-Wilson Awards at The Ellen Theatre in downtown Bozeman. This free public event begins at 5:00 p.m. (doors open at 4:00 p.m.) and will honor five innovators whose work is transforming classrooms, communities, and conservation across the globe. This year's theme, Code for Tomorrow, highlights the ways technology is being used to connect people with nature, expand access to education, and build stronger, more informed communities.



2025 Honorees include  
Serge Belongie (top) and  
Pietro Perona (below).

Among the honorees are **Serge Belongie** and **Pietro Perona**, leaders of the Visipedia project, which powers the **iNaturalist** and **Merlin Bird ID** apps beloved by birders and naturalists worldwide. These tools have been downloaded more than 30 million times, enabling anyone with a smartphone to identify species and contribute valuable observations to global biodiversity databases.

For details, visit [acrmuseum.org/awards](https://acrmuseum.org/awards) or call 406-582-1288.

## Mark Your Calendar for Upcoming Tours, Classes and Events!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>8 Sept:</b> Sacajawea Audubon Society Monthly Program                                   | <b>14 Oct:</b> Sacajawea Audubon Society Wildlife Trivia                         |
| <b>10 Sept:</b> World Wildlife Fund service day - Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Event | <b>15 Oct:</b> Sacajawea Audubon Society Book Club                               |
| <b>13 Sept:</b> Yellowstone River Cleanup – Montana Freshwater Partners Event              | <b>18 Oct:</b> Busy Beaver Rendezvous – Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Event |
| <b>16 Sept:</b> Sacajawea Audubon Society Wildlife Trivia Theme - Leave it to Beaver       | <b>25 Oct:</b> Spooky Stroll – Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Event          |
| <b>17 Sept:</b> Sacajawea Audubon Society Book Club  | <b>10 Nov:</b> Sacajawea Audubon Society Monthly Program                         |
| <b>26 Sept:</b> 2025 Stibitz-Wilson Awards – American Computer and Robotics Museum Event   | <b>11 Nov:</b> Sacajawea Audubon Society Wildlife Trivia                         |
|  | <b>19 Nov:</b> Sacajawea Audubon Society Book Club                               |
| <b>4-5 Oct:</b> Bridger Raptor Festival  |  |
| <b>13 Oct:</b> Sacajawea Audubon Society Monthly Program                                   |  |

To see additional details including locations, please visit: [sacajaweaaudubon.org/events](https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/events)

## 9 MASTER NATURALISTS EARN CERTIFICATION IN SAS COURSE

We had a great time with the **SAS Master Naturalist** course this past spring! A group of 14 from near and far, (Julie commuted all the way from Butte!) explored the birds, bugs, and other living and non-living things that make our part of Montana so special. We formed lasting relationships with each other, and with the places we visited and learned from. In addition, Montana now has 9 new certified Master Naturalists!



*Native Andrena Miner Bee on Arrowleaf Balsamroot.*  
Photo by Cedar Mathers-Winn



*Master Naturalist student catches pollinators in the field.*  
Photo by Cedar Mathers-Winn



*The spring 2025 Master Naturalist cohort in front of some 2.7 billion-year-old rocks near Beartrap Canyon.* Photo by Cedar Mathers-Winn

The Master Naturalist Course is an 8-week course of classroom and outdoor lessons. It will deepen your experience and understanding of the fascinating landscape we call home. Next Course is March 2026.

## SAS FALL WILDLIFE WORKSHOPS

### FALL FORAY WITH A NATURALIST

**Tuesday, September 16, 5:30 pm - 7:30pm**

**Triple Tree Trail** (upper parking lot, off of Limestone Meadows Rd)

Join naturalist and educator Cedar Mathers-Winn to explore the natural beauty of Montana in the fall, and the stories behind it. Autumn colors, flocking birds, gorging bears, singing crickets – each has its own fascinating place in the ecology of autumn.

**COST: SAS Members \$35 • Non Members \$60**

**15 Participants** [Registration Form](#)

### CONIFERS OF SW MONTANA (FALL)

**Lecture: Tuesday, October 9, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm**

**Field: Thursday, October 11, 12:30 pm - 4:30 pm**

**Hope Lutheran Church / Bridger Bowl**

Conifers are ubiquitous in the northern Rockies, dominating most of our ecosystems. They also lead extraordinary and diverse lives, allowing them to thrive from dry plains up to treeline. But how do they do it? And why don't they drop their leaves? How old do they get? And how do you even tell them apart??? Come learn about these extraordinary plants – how they live, and how their lives influence all those around them.



*Join naturalist and educator Cedar Mathers-Winn in our Fall Wildlife Workshops to explore the natural beauty of Montana in the fall.*

We will meet for a Thursday evening lecture on conifer identification and natural history, followed by a Saturday afternoon in the field learning from the trees themselves.

**COST SAS Member \$50 • Non Member \$75**

**15 Participants** [Registration Form](#)

**Continued on Page 11**



Continued from Page 10

## SAS FALL WILDLIFE WORKSHOPS

### WINTER TRACKING IN HYALITE CANYON

Saturday, December 6, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Hyalite Canyon

**W**inter provides the perfect conditions not only to learn what animals have passed through our area, but also to read the story of their passing. A trail is, in a very literal sense, an animal's story written in snow. In this field class, we will spend an afternoon exploring tracks and sign in Hyalite Canyon, in the Gallatin Range. You will not only learn how to identify the writer – but more importantly, how to read.

**Cost:** SAS Members \$40 • Non Members \$65

15 Participants [Registration Form](#)

**Save the Date: December 8, 2025**

#### Special Holiday Program

A Celebration of Birds in Photographs and Poem with **Uschi Carpenter**, Nature & Wildlife Photographer.



## Wildlife Trivia Night with Sacajawea Audubon Society

**JOIN US on Tuesday, Sept. 16th**

**Lockhorn Cider House—21 S Wallace, Bozeman**

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

**Trivia Theme : Leave it to Beavers**



Led by Claire Kirk, Beaver Conflict Resolution Technician with the National Wildlife Federation.

Test your knowledge and learn more about Beavers

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

*SAS Trivia Nights at Lockhorn Cider House are held on the 3rd Tuesday evening of every month in 2025!*



## 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 \$** \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Bridger Raptor Study      ☐ Wetland Campaign
- ☐ Story Mill Park Bird Feeding Station      ☐ Wherever is Needed

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip)

**Phone:** (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sacajawea Audubon Society Newsletter is sent by email. ☐ I would like a paper newsletter mailed to me.  
We do not share your information except with the National Audubon Society, so your contact information is safe with us.  
Please check this box ☐ if you do **NOT** want your information shared with the National Audubon Society.

☐ **YES! include another \$20 to join National Audubon Society**

**Mail this form and your check to:** Sacajawea Audubon Society, Attn: Membership, PO Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 59771-1711

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

September '25 Newsletter

**Choose your membership level above, and thank you for considering an additional donation.**

*Join or Renew for 2025 by filling out the membership form above or check out the many benefits of membership and join online at*

<https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/join-sas/>



**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)

## Annual Bridger Raptor Festival – October 4-5 at Bridger Bowl

**T**he **Bridger Raptor Festival**, hosted by **Bridger Bowl** and **Sacajawea Audubon Society**, is just around the corner. We are getting excited for family fun activities, guided walks to the Ridge, Raptor ID presentations, Build A Nifty Nest Box and other programs & activities. A gracious donation of 800 *Oliver the Osprey* children's books has been made by **Northwestern Energy**, which will serve as the festival's Passport to Education Prize. The author, Erin Madison, will also be present to sign copies.

The Montana Raptor Conservation Center will bring live raptors as a demonstration on both days of the festival. The **guided walks to the Bridger Ridge are a fresh event this year**, and will be an opportunity to meet the official Hawk Watchers and see where the raptor count actually takes place.

The festival draws thousands of visitors every year. The true star of the migration show is the **Golden Eagle**, which shows up in droves of between 1 – 3 thousand individuals each season. The timing of the Raptor Festival in early October is significant, because this corresponds with the peak in the Golden Eagle migratory season. Visit <https://bridgerraptorfest.com/> for a complete list of events.

### Volunteer Opportunity .....

The Raptor Festival would not take place without our dedicated volunteers! **Your help is needed.** Signup online at [sacajaweaudubon.org/bridger-raptor-festival-oct-25](http://sacajaweaudubon.org/bridger-raptor-festival-oct-25) or contact Bret Davis at [bretdavis@sacajaweaudubon.org](mailto:bretdavis@sacajaweaudubon.org)

