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 Special Holiday Program & Membership Meeting: Monday, December 8

Bird Woman Legacy:

Preserving What is Threatened with Fortitude and Resolution

FINE BIRDS OF MONTANA

Presented by Uschi Carpenter -Nature, wildlife, and fine arts photographer

e are thrilled to have Uschi Carpenter present our special holiday program December 8th at the Emerson Center for Arts & Culture. This enchanting program will weave together her beautiful images with her poetry as a tribute to Bird Woman i.e. Sacajawea and to our Montana birds, providing a call for conservation.

Join us at 6:00 PM for a fun filled Holiday Party. Enjoy refreshments, mingle with friends. Acquaint yourself with all the SAS programs that your membership, donations, and volunteer work has accomplished year after year. It is truly something to celebrate!

Uschi's program will premiere at 7:00 PM, in the Emerson's Crawford Theatre. Please note that this program will not be recorded. You have the opportunity to attend in person or virtually only. So don't miss this event!

Uschi has generously agreed to host a signing of her gorgeous 2026 calendars. She will donate \$5.00 to SAS for each calendar sold during

our event. Don't miss this opportunity to purchase a beautiful gift that will also directly benefit our organization.



The December in-person meeting will be held Monday, December 8, 2025 at The Emerson Center For Arts & Culture, 111 South Grand Ave. A holiday social begins at 6:00 PM in the ballroom; the program begins at 7:00 PM. in the Crawford Theatre. A cash bar will be available.

For virtual attendance, please register at sacajaweaaudubon.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@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

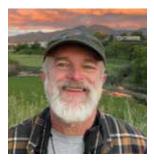


Ursula "Uschi" Carpenter is a nature, wildlife, and fine arts photographer based in Missoula, Montana. Her photographs of birds have been called poignant and poetic. You may be familiar with Uschi's almost daily posts on the Montana Birding page on Facebook.

She received a Master's degree in German and English literature and linguistics from the University of the Saarland in Germany and studied at the University of Bradford in Great Britain and the University of California at Berkeley, California. Her careers in teaching and international relations took

her on a path from rural Montana to the upper political echelons of Washington, D.C. But it is in the art of capturing the beauty of the wild in both words and images that Uschi found her true calling. Her photography is said to carry a certain "gravitas", which is reflected in the poetry that is often paired with her images.

A MESSAGE from SAS PRESIDENT, CHRIS NIXON



lease join with other members and the community for our **December Holiday Program**. It is traditionally our largest and arguably most impressive gathering of the year. Special thanks to our volunteer event coordinator Brooke Everest for dreaming up this special holiday program and SAS Showcase!

This year our celebration and presentation will be held at the Emerson Center for Arts and Culture - Monday, December 8th. Gather at 6:00 PM in the ballroom for hors d'oeuvres and drinks / open bar. Tables will be set up displaying all the programs and activities your membership, volunteer hours, and financial donations make possible. Door prize entries will be earned by visiting each display - so make sure you allow time to make the rounds. It will be a wonderful time to celebrate our organizations collective accomplishments and on-going work.

At 7:00 PM, we'll assemble in the Crawford Theatre for a heartfelt multi-media presentation by Montana photographer Uschi Carpenter. **NOTE: This program will NOT BE RECORDED**. You have the opportunity to attend in person or virtually (live), so don't miss this event! *See page 1* for more information.

Following Uschi's presentation, there will be drawings for **door prizes** and our **annual raffle** of two **Bridger Bowl season passes**. Special thanks to Bridger Bowl for their generous donation. Proceeds from the raffle help fund the **Bridger Raptor Count**. *See page 5* to learn how you can purchase raffle tickets before the limited number (500) runs out.

Our **Motus Towers** are going up! In a single year, this project has become our 3rd largest project (financially) of all time. At our celebration, there will be tables covering all the facets of our largest program, **Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve**, including the Motus project. These displays will provide a quick study on everything wetland related here in Bozeman. We plan to break ground on the wetland restoration fall of 2026. **We need your continued support through donations RESTRICTED to the Indreland Wetland Restoration** to move this project across the finish line and open it to the public. **Please be GENEROUS!**

Stop by other tables to sign up for the **Spring Master Naturalist Class**, and the upcoming **Christmas Bird Counts**.

This, our final gathering of the year, will be a great opportunity to renew your annual memberships both with the Sacajawea Audubon Society and National Audubon Society.

We look forward to seeing you all there!!

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Education Chair Open Position
Conservation Paulette Epple

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Field Trips, John Parker

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Hospitality Open Position
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Programs Open Position

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Social Media/ Lou Ann Harris and Mikaela Howie Socialmedia@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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bookclub@sacajaweaaudubon.org

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amy@vandycreative.com

Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Board Members

President Frank Marchak, <u>frankm@bozemanwetlands.org</u>
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Bill Simkins, bills@bozemanwetlands.org
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Stewardship Intern & Busy Beaver Coordinator

Morgan Anderson, morgana@bozemanwetlands.org

BIRD NOTES

.....by John Parker

ith the mild weather continuing well into November, it has been an interesting fall migration with a number of unusual birds moving through this area. I can't recall another time when there were so many uncommon or rare birds in such a short time. Meanwhile many of the expected birds, such as waterfowl, were slow to arrive from the north.

During this period, the first bird of note was the **Red**throated Loon that the October 18 Sacajawea Audubon Society Ennis Lake field trip participants spotted on their arrival at the Meadow Lake fishing access. With Ennis Lake being one of the premier staging areas for Common Loon in Western Montana, it's also arguably the best spot to search for other not so common loons. This same group also found two Say's Phoebes along the north shore of Ennis Lake. Hands down, this is the latest fall record for Say's Phoebe in our area of Montana.

Meanwhile, on that same day Mary Keck discovered a Northern Parula in her north Bozeman yard. This warbler did not stray too far from its favorite birch tree during the three days it was in the neighborhood, giving many others the chance to see a bird that has only been seen about thirty previous times in Montana. Incredibly, a second Northern Parula was spotted by Paulette Epple in Mike and Stephanie Becker's yard near Harrison on November 12th, making it the latest fall record for Montana. Not as rare but still a nice find locally, was the



Cattle Egret "Carl" made a lengthy stay in the field just west of Bozeman's Baxter Lane Post Office. Photo by Ed Harper.

Tennessee Warbler that visited Lou Ann Harris' northwest Bozeman yard from October 29th till November 2nd.

Lou Ann also discovered the nearly famous Cattle **Egret**, sometimes known as "Carl", on October 21st in the field just west of the Bozeman Post Office on Baxter Lane. This egret stayed in the same vicinity for almost three weeks, foraging along a short strip of the North 19th Street corridor. Long staying and

highly visible, it was possible to observe the egret at length and see what opportunistic feeders Cattle Egrets are (several people saw it eat voles, along with numerous invertebrates). Being one of the world's most adaptable birds, Cattle Egrets are remarkable for their amazing range expansion over the last 150 years.

Originally a southwest Asian species, it now inhabits every continent except for Antarctica. Cattle Egrets first reached the western hemisphere in the late 1800's, North America by the 1950's, and Montana in 1974. This particular bird is Gallatin County's second record.



A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher spotted by Josiah Kiehl, was the first recorded appearance in Gallatin County. Photo by John Parker.

The wonders kept coming. On October 26th, while walking his dog in the northwestern corner of Three Forks, Josiah Kiehl discovered a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. The core range of this spectacular flycatcher is in Texas and Oklahoma, though

they are somewhat prone to wandering. This was the Scissortailed Flycatcher's first appearance in Gallatin County, though another one was seen less than two miles away across the Jefferson River in Broadwater Co. in 2001. In 2020 another Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was seen along Brackett Creek Road in Park Co.

Rounding out this fall's surprises, was a White-eyed Vireo

that John Parker found foraging in the willows next to Cattail Pond in northwest Bozeman, on October 31st. This cooperative vireo, often within 10-15 feet of the sidewalk, was last seen the morning of November 2nd. The White-eyed Vireo is not especially known for vagrancy, and this wanderer was only the



A White-eyed Vireo, spotted in northwest Bozeman, is a rare vagrant to be spotted in this area. Photo by Ian van Coller.

fifth Montana state record. Not an uncommon bird in the south and eastern parts of the U.S., by this time of year it should have been well on its way to its wintering grounds in the region around the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Basin.



INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE

AUDUBON UPDATE: DECEMBER 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.

Exceptional Stewardship Activity Advances Our Vision and Goals

n 2025, the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve experienced a year of exceptional stewardship activity that advanced our vision and goals. Our urban wetland continues to serve as an accessible environmental study area for learners of all ages, providing hands-on education in wetland ecology. Our vision remains to document the effects of human influence on wetland communities and to inspire the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands throughout our region.

The Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Board of Directors has been working diligently to finalize restoration planning and to advance the Sacajawea Wetland Mitigation Bank. The summary below provides an overview of recent progress in restoration design, anticipated construction time-frames, and the proposed mitigation bank.

Wetland Restoration Planning and Design

Recent Accomplishments

- The Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Board worked corroboratively with the City of Bozeman and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to finalize plans for temporary construction access for the restoration and enhancement of the site.
- A big focus, in 2025, was coordinating with adjacent landowners to establish additional land buffers around the Preserve. These buffers will support long-term wetland protection and may ultimately be incorporated into a broader site management framework.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers has approved the mitigation bank prospectus as of November. The next step in this process is the submission of a draft mitigation instrument, which is planned for December. This approval is a significant milestone that lays the groundwork for wetland mitigation in the Gallatin Watershed.
- The Indreland Board is actively progressing on the preliminary design for trails, wildlife viewing blinds and other visitor features aiming to create an educational environment while ensuring safety for all people and wildlife within the Preserve.



Sandhill Crane and Canada Geese enjoying an autumn day in the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve.

Current Restoration Challenges

An on-site visit, in 2025, by the Burlington Northern Santa
Fe (BNSF) engineer responsible for design review has helped
to advance the associated lease-related agreements. Current
challenges involve completing the Mitigation Bank with the
Army Corps of Engineers and the associated permits.

We are moving forward with preliminary designs with how people will access the wetland without impacting the animals and ecology.

Giving Tuesday 2025

Thank you for remembering our wildlife neighbors on December 2nd!

iving Tuesday is a day that encourages people to do good as part of a global movement unleashing the power of radical generosity. Join Sacajawea Audubon Society in celebrating this global day of generosity and philanthropy by making a gift today! Your gift helps us continue to protect our local Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem natural environment for wildlife and people.

Please use the QR Code Provided here.

2025 PRELIMINARY REPORT

he 34th consecutive, full-season count of southbound migrating raptors atop the Bridger Mountains began on August 27th and was completed on October 31st. A

total of 2,950 migrating raptors of 17 species were recorded in 410.4 hours of observation, for a season-long average of 720 raptors per 100 hours. Remarkably, Golden Eagles yielded the highest count, with a total of 1,401 individuals tallied (340/100 hrs.). The species with the second highest count was the Sharp-shinned Hawk, with a total of



The 2025 season experienced an exceptional Golden Eagle flight on October 8-10 and again on October 17-18. Photo by Nick Bolgiano.

487 sharpies (120/100 hrs.). **Cooper's Hawks** were third in abundance, with 389 individuals (95/100 hrs.). A complete list of the total count for each of the 22 migrating raptor species tallied for 2025 is shown in below.

Turkey Vulture	23
Golden Eagle	1401
Osprey	2
American Kestrel	149
Bald Eagle	46
Merlin	15
Northern Harrier	70
Peregrine Falcon	15
Sharp-shinned Hawk	487
Cooper's Hawk	389
Prairie Falcon	19
American Goshawk	8

Unknown Accipitrine33
Broad-winged Hawk51
Unknown Buteo11
Red-tailed Hawk163
Unknown Falcon8
Rough-legged Hawk22
Unknown Eagle5
Swainson's Hawk12
Unknown Raptor11
Ferruginous Hawk10
TOTAL2950

The exceptional Golden Eagle flight was highlighted by especially high numbers on the October 8th (148), 9th (290) 10th (108) 17th (183) and 18th (120), for a grand total of 849 in five days!

We wish to thank our stalwart primary counters for their consistent hard work throughout the season. **Isabel Masi, Oskar Robinson** and **Ruby Neatherlin** each did an exceptional job searching the skies, counting and recording every individual migrant throughout the 2025 fall count season! A great many other observers assisted with the count throughout the 2025 season. Hawkwatch will provide a complete list of volunteer observers in the final report, which will be available on Sacajawea Audubon Society's website upon completion. Watch for this to be posted by mid-January.

SUPPORT THE BRIDGER MOUNTAIN RAPTOR PROJECT

Enter to Win One of Two Bridger Bowl Season Ski Passes!



acajawea Audubon Society's important Bridger Mountain Raptor Project is entering its 34th year, and your support is more crucial than ever. To ensure the continuation of this vital monitoring program, we're excited to raffle off two Bridger Bowl Ski Area season passes, valued at \$1230 each.

The data collected from this survey is essential for tracking population trends of Golden Eagles and other raptors, helping to shape conservation efforts. The funds raised from this raffle will cover approximately one-quarter of the project's \$20,000 budget.

Tickets are just \$10 each, or you can get 6 for \$50!

Every ticket you purchase helps us better understand and safeguard the future of these majestic birds.

Get your raffle tickets today and support the ongoing work of the Bridger Mountain Raptor Project!

A big thank you to Bridger Bowl Ski Area for their continued support of the Bridger Mountain Raptor Project.

Purchase raffle tickets at SAS program meetings and SAS Wildlife Trivia Nights at the Lockhorn Cider House, or request tickets online by scanning the QR code.

Two Winners will be drawn on December 8th, 2025 at the SAS Holiday Program at the Emerson Center for Arts and Culture.



<u>JOIN US</u> on Tuesday, **Dec 16** Lockhorn Cider House – 21 S Wallace, Bozeman 5:30 PM- Social Hour – 6:30 PM Trivia begins

Please visit <u>sacajaweaaudubon.org</u> or our <u>Facebook</u> page to find out the November Wildlife Trivia Theme.

PARTICIPATE IN THE 2025 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

ome and join in on the fun during one of our area's Christmas Bird Counts. The Christmas bird counts are an opportunity for beginning-to-expert birders to get together for the day, and share this holiday tradition. If you are unable to join a count for the entire day, another option for participation is to be a feeder watcher. Please contact the compiler in your area if you would like to be a feeder watcher for one of the counts.

For more information, contact your area's count compiler. As a courtesy, please make contact in advance of your scheduled count day. This will allow them the opportunity to plan and organize for the best outcome. **Participation is free.**

Ennis Wednesday, December 17th

Compiler: Don Skaar, (406) 465-6135 skaar.fcs@gmail.com

West Yellowstone Friday, December 19th

Compiler: Tut Fuentevilla, (406) 646-7001 education@grizzlydiscoveryctr.com

* Teams may observe by car, foot, snowmobile, or ski on the day of the event.

There will be an optional meeting at the Grizzly & Wolf Center at 7:30 AM for participants to gather before heading out to their routes or counting locations.



Bozeman Saturday, December 20th

Compiler: Sam Koenen, (406) 600-7502 goodbirding@pm.me (email preferred)

Livingston Sunday, December 21st

Compiler: George Nixon, (406) 219-6169 hawkowl526@gmail.com

Yellowstone Sunday, December 21st

Compiler: Katy Duffy, (307) 699-2696 katyduffyMT@gmail.com

Three Forks Saturday, December 27th

Compiler: Sam Koenen (406) 600-7502 goodbirding@pm.me (email preferred)

Ruby Valley Sunday, December 28th

Compiler: Tom Forwood (406) 570-6432 tjfishing75@gmail.com (email preferred)

SEE YOU AT THE CHRISTMAS STROLL!

In Front Of Chalet Sports - Downtown Bozeman December 6, 2025 @ 4:30pm - 7:30pm

Join in Downtown Bozeman's greatest holiday tradition - the Christmas Stroll. The first Saturday in December, the holiday season kicks-off with the Stroll! Starting at 4:30 PM, Santa Claus will work his way down Main Street, singing Christmas carols and lighting the downtown holiday lights with

festive friends in tow. Bring the whole family down to enjoy merry activities and traditional holiday treats until 7:30 PM.

Sacajawea Audubon Society will have a booth in front of Chalet Sports at the corner of Main and Wilson. You will have the opportunity to purchase Bridger Bowl Season Ski Pass Raffle Tickets, NEW SAS Logo Swag Tote Bags, and SAS Kids bird painting bags....a great gift for grandparents, aunts and uncles.



Sacajawea Audubon Society Upcoming Events!

6 Dec: Winter Tracking Workshop

6 Dec: Christmas Stroll - stop by the SAS Booth

8 Dec: SAS Special Holiday Program - Emerson Center

17 Dec: Ennis Christmas Bird Count

19 Dec: West Yellowstone Christmas Bird Count

20 Dec: Bozeman Christmas Bird Count

21 Dec: Livingston Christmas Bird Count

21 Dec: Yellowstone Christmas Bird Count

27 Dec: Three Forks Christmas Bird Count

28 Dec: Ruby Valley Christmas Bird Count

12 Jan: Sacajawea Audubon Society Membership Meeting

- Hope Lutheran Church

29 Jan: World Wetland Day Program

01 Feb: World Wetland Day Indrealand Audubon Preserve

Snowshoe Tour

To see additional details including locations, please visit: sacajaweaaudubon.org/events

RENEW OR JOIN SAS TODAY- MAKE 2026 OUR BEST YEAR YET!

or more than 50 years, Sacajawea Audubon Society has embraced the mission of protecting birds and the places they need here in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem of Montana. Your membership and additional gifts fund a well-integrated program of science, local advocacy, environmental education, and places to enjoy nature. Your support makes it possible for us to stand up locally for birds and other wildlife and to defend a healthy habitat, and stable climate they—and we all—need.

Even if you belong to the National Audubon Society (NAS), we need your support through a local Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) Membership. As an SAS member, you'll enjoy the benefits of a member while knowing that your annual dues are used locally, for conservation right here in your own backyard.

SAS Local Membership gives you many benefits:

- •Protect one of the last remaining large, nearly intact ecosystems in the northern temperate zone.
- •Enhance bird-friendly communities in Montana with our bird-friendly landscape program.

- Contribute to important environmental education programs about birds, wildlife and habitat.
- Connect with vital partnerships between other nonprofit environmental groups, citizens and local governments.
- •Advocate for environmental issues locally and regionally.
- Participate in activities at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve environmental study area.

SAS Members Enjoy:

- Free monthly keynote speaker meetings.
- Free birding hotspots guide. Info on birding around the Gallatin Valley & beyond
- Free monthly member e-newsletter (published 9 times a year).
- Member-only discounts on education, programs and events.
- •Savings on purchases and access to member-only sales.
- •Participation in many citizen science projects.
- Free guided birding field trips.

Renew your membership for 2026 by filling out the membership form below or, join online at: sacajaweaaudubon.org/for-members

Thank You To Those Who Have Renewed Your Annual SAS Local Membership!

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Individual or Family | January - December 2026 Basic Membership\$25 Name(s): _____ Supporting Membership\$50 Address: (Supporting local conservation & education projects) (Street or PO Box) Student Membership\$10 (College & High School Students) (Zip) (City) Additional Donation \$ Phone: () ☐ Indreland-Audubon ☐ Bridger Raptor Study Wetland Preserve Story Mill Park Bird Email: ■ Wherever is Needed Feeding Station 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 \Box if you do **NOT** want your information shared with the National Audubon Society. ☐ YES! include another \$20 to join National Audubon Society

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

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!

> Join or Renew for 2026 by filling out the membership form above or check out the many benefits of membership and join online at sacajaweaudubon.org/membership.

December '25 Newsletter



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@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

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

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

