



SacajaweaAudubonNews

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON BUILDS ON AN INTEREST IN BIRDS TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ENJOYMENT, EDUCATION AND ACTION.

October 2014

Calendar at a Glance

Sept 1st - Nov 5th	Bridger Raptor Count
Oct 3rd - 5th	Bridger Raptor Festival
Oct 13th	SAS Meeting
Oct 14th	Missouri Headwaters Workshop
Oct 25th	Ennis Lake Field Trip
Nov 10th	Raptor Festival Raffle Drawing



Audubon's Birds and Climate Initiative—and Us

Monday October 13th , 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Hope Lutheran Church

2152 W. Graf Street in Bozeman

Join Montana Audubon's Amy Cilimburg for a slide show presentation about the "Audubon Report" on birds imperiled by climate change. Over the past seven years, Audubon's team has analyzed more than 30 years of bird observations from the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, and data from leading climatologists in the US and Canada. This assessment gives us an unprecedented ability to project where birds are most likely — and unlikely — to survive in the future. We'll look at the future of swans, curlews, chickadees, hummingbirds, and more. And we'll circle around to the status of climate change solutions. Much can be done locally for bird conservation—to create a better future for all. Finally, Amy will update attendees on a handful of other Montana Audubon priorities, including the current status of Greater Sage-Grouse conservation.

Amy Cilimburg is the Director of Bird Conservation and Climate Policy for Montana Audubon. She spearheads the Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program in Montana and collaborates with others to protect Montana's birds and their habitat. Prior to coming to Audubon, Amy was the Assistant Director of the University of Montana's Avian Science Center. She has a M. S. in Wildlife Biology from the University of Montana. She lives and strives to reduce her carbon footprint in Missoula with her husband and daughter.

-Art by Charis Tsevis

Missouri Headwaters State Park Trident Extension Trail Master Planning Workshop

Tuesday, October 14, 2014

Come be a part of the creation of a new trail at Missouri Headwaters State Park. This trail will start at the boat-ramp parking lot at Missouri Headwaters State Park and continue eastward onto Holcim Inc. property towards the old town site of Trident. The trail will parallel the Missouri River and provide excellent viewing of the limestone cliffs where Peregrine Falcons, Prairie Falcons and Great Horned Owls have been found nesting in the past. The trail will also provide opportunities to view water birds, such as Double-crested Cormorants, on the river's gravel bars, and numerous song and grassland birds, such as Lark Sparrow.

To help design the trail Sacajawea Audubon Society has teamed up with the Montana State University-Landscape Design Studio, and we would like to invite you to participate in a master planning workshop. During the workshop students will present a contextual project overview. This will be followed by a gathering of input and ideas from workshop attendees.

So bring your memories, experiences and ideas to the workshop and **help create a vision for the new trail!**

Join us from 6:30-8:00 pm

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Headquarters: 1400

South 19th Avenue



-Photo by Mike Hendrix

Bird of the Month



Bobolink

Dolichonyx oryzivorus

Length: 5.9-8.3 inches

Wingspan: 10.6 inches

Weight: 1-2 oz.

Now that bird migration is upon us in the Gallatin Valley, it's a perfect time to talk about one of the kings of songbird migration, the Bobolink. The Bobolink travels some 12,500 miles to and from the southern interior of South America every year, and over its lifetime it may travel the equivalent of 4 or 5 times around the circumference of the earth. A migrating Bobolink can orient itself with the earth's magnetic field, thanks to iron oxide in the bristles of its nasal cavity. Bobolinks also use the night sky to guide their flight. Normally a daytime forager, the Bobolink sometimes feeds after dark on bright nights during migration, to build their fat reserves for the long flight over the Gulf of Mexico.

In its breeding plumage, the male Bobolink is unmistakable with a white back and black underparts, giving it the nickname "skunk bird". The male Bobolink is also known for his long, burbling song, often sung while flying in a helicopter-like pattern. Bobolinks molt all their body feathers twice a year. When the male grows new feathers on his wintering grounds, they have yellowish tips, which gives him a brown and buff plumage. Eventually the pale tips wear off to reveal his striking black-and-white breeding colors.

Bobolinks prefer to nest in meadows and irrigated hayfields, which is why you'll find them in the Gallatin Valley. The female builds a nest on the ground of grasses, weed stems and sedges. She then lays 3-7 irregularly spotted bluish or reddish eggs, which she incubates for 11-14 days. The young fledge 11 days later. The species name of the Bobolink *oryzivorus* means "rice eating" and refers to this bird's appetite for rice and other grains.

Source: All About Birds - Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Update on the Wings Across The Big Sky Bird Festival

If you haven't heard, the 15th Annual *Wings Across The Big Sky Bird Festival*, held June 6-8th in Bozeman was an unqualified success! Attendance this year broke all previous records with over 420 participants. People came from all over the U.S. and Canada to enjoy the open spaces and great birds of Southwest Montana. Beginning at Friday night's social featuring Ed Harper's bird identification panel, to the great lineup of field trips, to John Marzluff's fascinating talk on corvids, to the banquet, awards, silent auction and delicious dessert auction. Everyone seemed to have a great time.

Sacajawea Audubon co-hosted the festival with Montana Audubon, and we couldn't be prouder of the job that our festival committee and volunteers did in making this year's festival the best ever! We managed to pull it off without any major glitches, which speaks to the 9 months of planning that went into it. A small army of 65 chapter members (plus a few extras) were involved in some aspect of the festival. Thanks to you all! I can't list everyone's name here, but I do want to thank my committee members who were so terrific: John Parker - Field Trips, Sharon Hanton - Volunteers, Jeff Safford - Sponsorships, Vickie Backus - Silent Auction, Diane Gresham - Dessert Auction/Decorations, Karen Ehlert -

Decorations/Dessert Auction, Loreene Reid - Facilities/Sponsorships, Paulette Epple - Registration, Janne Hayward - Registration, Adele Pittendrigh - Publicity/Registration and Leo Freeman - Sponsorships. A special thank you goes to Andrew Guttenberg for his wonderful Calliope Hummingbird artwork and to Jackie Wilson who provided comic relief in the form of a human-sized corvid.

Next year's festival will held for the first time in Helena, the first weekend in June. We hope to see you all there!



L-R: Lou Ann Harris, Janne Hayward, Diane Gresham compete in the Bird Calling Contest. Photo by Janice Miller.

Bird Notes

We often think of the fall raptor migration peaking in late September and early October, which is true for averaging all raptor migration numbers taken together. But all raptors don't spread their migration evenly across the calendar; with **Swainson's Hawks** being a notable example. When Mike Myers stepped outside on the morning of September 8th, he saw a single Swainson's Hawk overhead. On a hunch that it could be a good flight day for hawks across the valley, Mike decided to hop on his bike and ride over to the small hill at the Regional Park off of Oak Street. Immediately rewarded with seeing a small kettle and scattered Swainson's Hawks totaling over 25 birds, Mike then biked on over to a high point on Harper Puckett Road, where he could be closer to the main flow of hawks. Over the course of the next four hours Mike watched as several kettles of 25-30 birds and numerous smaller groups moved south above the Gallatin River corridor. In the end Mike tallied **242 Swainson's Hawks** during the four and a half hour period he was counting (also seen: several Turkey Vultures, 2 Golden Eagles, 1 Bald Eagle, 2

Northern Harriers, 1 Cooper's Hawk, 6 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 Merlin, and 2 Prairie Falcons). His only regret was that he had to return home and miss the continuing flow of hawks across the valley. To me this is certainly one of the most astounding migration events ever to be observed in this



region. This number of Swainson's Hawks seen in a single day in this area, borders on a magnitude increase in any previously documented movement for this species. The only comparable single day raptor movement locally was the October 17, 1997 flight of 596 Golden Eagles, over the Bridger Ridge Hawkwatch site. So, next time there is an approaching front from the north and the conditions are right, look up!

Less dramatic was a nice sustained movement of passerines across the region during the Labor Day weekend. Many people commented on the high numbers of **Wilson's Warblers** during this period. The rarest warbler found was the female **Black-and-white Warbler** that Ed Harper saw August 29th, at the East Gallatin Recreation Area. Though Black-and-white Warblers breed in far eastern Montana, this is only the fifth time one has been recorded here in the Gallatin Valley. That same weekend, Paul Gore had a **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** visiting his feeder off of Cottonwood Road south of Bozeman.

For the first time in many float trips on the Madison River, Robin and Richard Wolcott encountered a **Harlequin Duck**. This lone female was seen above the Ruby Creek Campground on both August 29 and 30.

-John Parker

Thank you to all our sharp-eyed birders for reporting your great sightings. Please report your Bird Sightings by the 9th of the month to John Parker at 586-5863 or birdsightings@sacajaweaudubon.org

October Field Trip Ennis Lake Waterfowl

Saturday, October 25th

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

Carpool and depart at 8:00 am



This should be near the peak time for migrating waterfowl. Ennis Lake is one of the premiere staging areas for migrating waterfowl in southwestern Montana. Thousands of ducks can be spread across the lake on any given day. As is typical with high concentrations of birds, there is always the possibility of a rarity being found. Bring a lunch as we'll be out until at least mid-afternoon. Also, remember to bring plenty of warm clothes as it will likely be cold and windy. For more information and to make reservations, call John Parker at 586-5863.



Sacajawea Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1711
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Sacajawea Audubon Society, affiliated with the National Audubon Society, meets on the second Monday of each month, September through May.

Sacajawea Audubon News is sent to all Sacajawea Audubon Society members monthly September through May. Deadline is the 10th of the month preceding the month articles will appear. Please send to: **Mary Cloud Ammons, 503 Bozeman, Bozeman MT 59715** or newsletter@sacajaweaudubon.org.

Change of Address: Please notify Sally MacDonald, 223-9167 or membership@sacajaweaudubon.org if your address changes. When you move or are away, newsletters are returned to us for an extra fee.

Find more at the **Sacajawea Audubon Society Website** at: <http://www.sacajaweaudubon.org/>

Mailing Address

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Membership Application

National Audubon Society
 (Includes chapter membership)

- National, State and Chapter Audubon Membership
- National Audubon Magazine
- Monthly Sacajawea Audubon newsletter September through May by surface mail or E-mail
- Admission to National Audubon sanctuaries
- Support of National Audubon conservation efforts

Name: _____

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_____ \$20 First Time Member

_____ I would like to receive the chapter newsletter by E-mail only.

Mail your check and application to:

Sacajawea Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
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Montana Audubon: 406-443-3949; PO Box 595, Helena, MT 59624; mtaudubon@mtaudubon.org; www.mtaudubon.org For direct contact: shoffman@mtaudubon.org
 Montana Bird Hotline: 406-721-9799 to report unusual or out-of-season birds

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