



# SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

September 2014

## Calendar at a Glance

Sept 1st - Nov 5th	Bridger Raptor Count
Sept 6th	Fall Migration Field Trip
Sept 8th	SAS Meeting
Oct 3rd - 5th	Bridger Raptor Festival
Nov 10th	Raptor Festival Raffle Drawing

## The Raven, The Trickster!

Monday Sept 8th, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.  
Hope Lutheran Church  
2152 W. Graf Street in Bozeman



Come join the Sacajawea Audubon Society for our first meeting of the year. For our meeting program we welcome Jim Garry, M.S.

Birds are compelling for reasons beyond their beauty, amazing flight, and fascinating behaviors. They inspire myths and stories that instruct, amuse, and intrigue us.

Jim Garry is one of those special people who has studied the folklore of many cultures, experienced the natural world deeply, especially the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, and weaves that knowledge into spellbinding stories. Come join us as we learn about the multi-faceted raven.

The Sacajawea Audubon Society meets the second Monday of the month (September through May) at 7:00 p.m., at the Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf Street (off of South 19th) in Bozeman. We invite the public to attend our meetings and participate in our field trips.



-Photos courtesy of Paulette Eppe

## Fall Migration Field Trip

Saturday, September 6, 2014

Trip Leader: Robin Wolcott 406-581-5418

Meet at 7:45 am at the Museum of the Rockies.  
Carpool and leave at 8 am.

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 Headwaters State Park and Three Forks area. The trip will last until early afternoon but let's be prepared for anything. Bring a lunch. Bring a scope if you have one. Bring your enthusiasm and your flexibility.

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

## Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the SAS

Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf St., Bozeman

May 12, 2014

Election of Board Members: Jeff Safford of the Nominating Committee presented the following slate of candidates for nomination:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	President:	Loreene Reid
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vice-president:	Lou Ann Harris
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	At-large Board Member:	Chris Nixon
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	At-large Board Member:	Peter Norlander
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	At-large Board Member:	Jackie Wilson

Motion: Jeff made a motion to elect the nominees as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## A SALUTE TO OUR BURDOCK REMOVAL VOLUNTEERS!



Thanks to our hard-working army of dedicated volunteers (over 22 people have been helping with this effort) some of our favorite trails and birding habitats are free of burdock seed heads this year. Over 35 thirty gallon bags of nasty burdock burs have already been hauled to their demise in the landfill. Watch for our volunteer's work (chopped up burdock stalks!) as you hike on the Gallagator Trail, Sourdough

Trail, the 'M', Drinking Horse Mountain, the trails at East Gallatin Recreation Area and more.

**BURDOCK ONLY REPRODUCES BY SEED.** That is 35 bags full of seeds that will not be spreading this year! And it means 35 bags of seeds that will not be ensnaring birds in their Velcro tight grasp or spreading in the fur of wildlife and dogs. Burdock is a biennial and so it is short lived. As we remain vigilant and continue to deny the plant the chance to reproduce, these stands of burdock will begin to die out. If you find burdock and wish to remove it remember these tips: Remove ALL the flowers and burs from the plant and dispose of them in

the landfill, then cut off the plant at the base to discourage re-blooming. If you cut off plants early in the summer, before August, come back and check them later. They often send up new bloom stalks.

Burdock eradication is not for the faint of heart. It is hot, prickly, challenging work and volunteers have been seen crawling on their hands and knees through the thickets to get to some of densest stands. Sacajawea Audubon and the birds and wildlife want to salute and thank our brave, hard working volunteers: Adele Pittendrigh, Andy Epple, Brad Barth, Carol, Colleen Moore, Gina Corolan, Hobart Collins, Janne Hayward, Jim, John Mugaas, Judy, Leo Freeman, Lila Bishop, Lou Ann Harris, Madeline Lieb, Martha Collins, Norm Bishop, Paulette Epple, Richard Wolcott, Robin Wolcott, Sandy Pittendrigh, Susan Bilo, and all others who have joined the war against burdock.



### Congratulations to Paulette & Peter!

Each year Montana Audubon recognizes outstanding individuals who work on conservation in Montana. Two of Sacajawea's members received awards at the 2014 Bird Festival in Bozeman:

#### Paulette Epple - Conservationist of the Year Award

Paulette Epple, the recipient of Montana Audubon's 2014 Conservationist of the Year Award, is honored for her conservation in her local community. She is recognized for her role in protecting Story Mill Community Park, Bozeman's newest city park. This 54-acre site is a wonderful natural area, and includes a portion of the East Gallatin River.

Through this project, Paulette facilitated a budding partnership between Sacajawea Audubon and The Trust for Public Land, and she rallied Audubon members to write letters of support to the Bozeman City Commission and to deliver testimony at two public meetings during the approval process. With Audubon membership support, Paulette has installed 13 nest boxes on the property, organized and led several field trips, and conducted bird surveys, building a bird list of over 80 species. The result? In March 2014, the Bozeman City Commission approved the Story Mill Community Park project, which is now slated to become Bozeman's largest community park. Paulette's volunteer efforts and dedication are exemplary.



#### Peter Norlander - Special Achievement Award

Peter Norlander received this year's Special Achievement Award as an individual who has been a committed and active volunteer for the Bozeman area chapter, Sacajawea Audubon—as well as an active member of the Montana Audubon Board of Directors.

An enthusiastic birder and mimicker of bird calls, Peter first served as Sacajawea Audubon's programs chair, later as a Board member, and even later as president of the Board for two terms. He has led field trips out of Bozeman to look for owls and for International Migratory Bird Day; and he participates in two local Christmas Bird Counts most years. Peter enjoys contributing to Citizen Science projects, specifically helping with bird surveys on the Yellowstone River, in Ennis, and on Hebgen Lake. In addition, Montana Audubon has also been fortunate to have Peter's enthusiasm as the Vice President of its Board of Directors, as well as an at-large Board member.



# Bridger Raptor Festival

## A Migration Celebration



### Eyes to the Skies Bridger Raptor Count in 24<sup>th</sup> Season Visitors are welcome!

Montana Audubon and HawkWatch International announce the 24th season of raptor migration research along the crest of the Bridger Mountains, running from September 1st through November 5th. Birders, hikers, and nature lovers are welcome at the observation station, where two expert observers are there daily, systematically counting all birds of prey on their annual southern migration. Bret Davis and Mikaela Howie are excited to return as our raptor count experts again this year.

The long-term data collected at the Bridger Mountains site helps scientists learn more about raptor migration patterns as well as regional and continental population trends. The Bridger site consistently records the largest concentration of autumnal migrant Golden Eagles known in the lower 48 states.

Visitors should drive to the parking area above the Bridger Bowl Ski Area facilities for an approximate two-hour hike to the observation point (2200' elevation gain). For additional information, including more specific directions for visiting the site as well as annual project reports, visit: [www.mtaudubon.org/birds/raptor.html](http://www.mtaudubon.org/birds/raptor.html).

Funding for the 2014 count is being provided by USDA Forest Service (Gallatin National Forest), Sacajawea Audubon Society (Bozeman-based Audubon chapter), and several individual Montana Audubon donors.

### Bridger Raptor Festival Raffle!



Be one of two winners of a Bridger Bowl Season Ski Pass.

Sacajawea and Montana Audubon will be raffling off 2 Bridger Bowl Season Ski Pass

Support Bridger Mountains Raptor Count, the largest concentration of autumnal migrant Golden Eagles known in the lower 48.

Raffle Ticket are \$10 each or 6 for \$50. Each Bridger Bowl Season Ski Pass is valued at \$699.

Drawing Date: November 10, 2014 7:00PM Sacajawea Audubon Program Meeting

To purchase a ticket and help Sacajawea and Montana Audubon continue this important research project, in our very own Bridger Mountains, email [raptorraffle@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:raptorraffle@sacajaweaaudubon.org) or visit [www.sacajaweaaudubon.org](http://www.sacajaweaaudubon.org) for more information.

### Bridger Raptor Festival October 3 - 5, 2014

Sacajawea Audubon is proud to be the educational host for this year's Bridger Raptor Festival. The Bridger Raptor Festival is an annual event held in early October at Bridger Bowl & Museum of the Rockies. The festival, which is free to the public, centers around the the largest known Golden Eagle migration in the United States.



Since 1991 a raptor migration count has taken place every fall at the Bridger Bowl ski area in the Gallatin National Forest just north of Bozeman. Festival activities center around raptor viewing and include nature walks and talks, educational and entertaining programs and activities for people of all ages.

### Bridger Raptor Festival's Keynote Speaker Peter Sherrington, will speak on "Twenty Years of Golden Eagle Migration Counts in the Alberta Rockies"

Peter Sherrington, Founder and Research Director of the Rocky Mountain Eagle Research Foundation, will describe how a single Golden Eagle sighting mushroomed into an impressive long-term research project. The Rocky Mountain Eagle Research Foundation has spent two decades at key viewing sites. Systematically recording spectacular numbers of eagles migrating north in the spring to Alaskan and Yukon summer breeding sites, Rocky Mountain Research Foundation monitors the fall migration south to winter ranges in the western U.S., Mexico and South America.



We look forward to Peter sharing his story and scenic photos as he chronicles this pioneering citizen-science research effort.

For more information and schedule of Festival events visit [www.bridgerraptorfest.org](http://www.bridgerraptorfest.org) or [www.sacajaweaaudubon.org](http://www.sacajaweaaudubon.org).

## Bird Notes

The **Eurasian Wigeon** that Lou Ann Harris first saw at Cottonwood Reservoir, north of Wilsall on May 24<sup>th</sup>, was seen again as late as June 8<sup>th</sup>. This is a new Montana late date for Eurasian Wigeon.

The colony of **Burrowing Owls**, 5 miles south of Three Forks, continued to expand this year, with three active burrows sighted.

Montana's 19<sup>th</sup> recorded **Eastern Phoebe** was discovered by Forrest Rowland and Tom Forwood May 27<sup>th</sup>, 10 miles north of Livingston, and was still singing at the same location along the Shields River, as late as 27 June.

While at Daily Lake in Paradise Valley April 28<sup>th</sup>, Richard Backstrom spotted an albino **Black-billed Magpie** with a flock of typical magpies.



*Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher in Cottonwood Canyon*

*-Photo courtesy of John Parker*

Locally this was the summer of the gnatcatcher. First a male **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was discovered May 31<sup>st</sup>, at Lewis and Clark Cavern State Park by Rowan Nyman. Then five days later Tom Forwood found a female in association with the male. On June 12<sup>th</sup> John Parker, Robin and Richard Wolcott found a male and female pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers 17 miles north of Three Forks, near the

Missouri River. This location is near last year's discovery of Montana's first Blue-gray Gnatcatchers away from their localized range in the southeastern part of the state. Amazingly yet another male and female pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were found in Cottonwood Canyon, west of Cardwell by Tom Forwood and Forrest Rowland on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Finally a single Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was heard by Tom Forwood on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, about 2/3 of a mile from the original pair of gnatcatchers at

Lewis and Clark Cavern State Park. All of these Blue-gray Gnatcatcher sightings have been within 30 miles of each other, in similar dry juniper habitat. Have these gnatcatchers always been present, or are more people covering previously under-birded locations? Or are these gnatcatchers part of a more recent range expansion? Before this past year there were only two or three Montana records away from their known range in the Pryor Mountains, and all of those sightings were of single birds away from likely breeding habitats.

On June 1<sup>st</sup> while checking bluebird boxes north of Bozeman, Lou Ann Harris and Janne Hayward discovered a nesting **Western Bluebird** sitting on five eggs. This is the first confirmed breeding record for the species in southwestern Montana. Subsequently the nest failed, but she was seen in the area as late as June 30<sup>th</sup>, in association with a male Mountain Bluebird.

By far the rarest migrating warbler in our area this past spring, was the male **Blackburnian Warbler** Bob Sisk saw in his yard May 16<sup>th</sup>. Over the years, Bob has had a number of interesting and unusual birds pass through his yard on the northeast end of the Bridger Range.

A male **Lesser Goldfinch** was seen by John Parker two miles north of Manhattan on June 28<sup>th</sup>. This is about the sixth record for southwest Montana. All of these Lesser Goldfinch sightings have occurred within the past five years, giving an indication of the rapid spread of this species in Montana.

I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer, and will see many fun and interesting birds this fall.

**-John Parker**

**Thank you to all our sharp-eyed birders for reporting your great sightings. Please report your Bird Sightings by the 9<sup>th</sup> of the month to John Parker at 586-5863 or [birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org)**

## Calling all Volunteers!

**There are so many wonderful activities to be involved in with Sacajawea Audubon this fall:**

**Bridger Raptor Festival, October 4 - 5, 2014 :** Sacajawea Audubon is proud to be the educational host this year. Over 3000 people are expected to attend this festival. We're in need of volunteers to help man our educational activities; Build A Nifty Nest Box, Binocular Games, Sketch-A-Bird, and A Young Naturalist Journal or volunteers to welcome and help direct festival goers to the many events. If you have two or three hours of your time to donate to the fun-filled Festival contact Loreene Reid at [pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org)

**IBA Bird Surveys** are a great way to get out birding for a morning and help to monitor the bird use on these valuable areas. Upcoming events include- Headwaters State Park IBA surveys: Contact Martha Collins at [marthacoll@msn.com](mailto:marthacoll@msn.com) or Madison IBA survey: contact Paulette Epple at [bigskyeppl@msn.com](mailto:bigskyeppl@msn.com)

**Education Committee Chair** – Duties: Determine overall community needs for environmental awareness and understanding within the scope of the Sacajawea Audubon's mission. The main focus of the education committee is to generate education programs for youth and adults in the schools and other community settings and events.

**Membership Development Chair** – Duties: work with Membership Data Chair and Hospitality Chair to promote membership cultivation, acquisition and welcome to the Chapter.

## Bird of the Month



### American Goldfinch

*Spinus tristis*

**Length: 4.3-5.1 inches**

**Wingspan: 7.5-8.7 inches**

**Weight: 0.46 oz.**

The American Goldfinch is a year-round resident of Montana. Known by some as a "yellow canary", the adult male goldfinch is

bright yellow with a black cap, black wings with white markings, and a pinkish orange bill. The female is a dull yellow overall with blackish wings. They have strong, short legs that enable them to balance on seedheads, sometimes hanging upside down as they forage.

The breeding season of the American Goldfinch is tied to thistle plants, whose fibrous seeds are incorporated into goldfinch nests and also fed to their nestlings. This means goldfinches nest later than other North American songbirds, waiting until June or July. Goldfinches are strictly seedeaters or "granivorous", only inadvertently swallowing an insect now and then.

It takes the female about six days to build an open cup nest of rootlets and plant fibers lined with plant down. It is often woven so tightly that it can hold water. The nest is usually placed in a shrub or tree sapling in an open setting. A clutch of 2-7 pale bluish eggs are laid over several days and incubated for two weeks. The nestlings fledge 11 to 17 days later.

The American Goldfinch is seasonally dimorphic, molting its body feathers twice a year, once in late winter and again in late summer. The appearance of winter birds is quite different, with drab unstreaked brown plumage and blackish wings.

Goldfinches are gregarious throughout the year, forming flocks with other finch species, such as Pine Siskins and Common Redpolls. They are common and welcome visitors at bird feeders and prefer sunflower and nyjer seeds. Their bouncy flight pattern, along with their "po-ta-to-chip" call is unmistakable.

The American Goldfinch is the state bird of Washington, New Jersey and Iowa.

*Source: Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

*Photo: Lou Ann Harris*

## Madison River Trumpeter Swan Release

Two Sacajawea Audubon volunteers were guests of the Trumpeter Swan release and celebration in the Madison Valley recently. Vickie Backus and Leo Freeman, representing Sacajawea and MT Audubon, joined the Friday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> festivities at the O'Dell Creek Headwaters (on the Granger Ranches) south of Ennis, MT, as guests of the Laszlo family. The five, seventy-day old swans were brought to the site by Bill Long, Program Director of the Wyoming Wetlands Society, from their home in Jackson, Wyoming. The cygnets (1<sup>st</sup> year swans) are offspring from the Society's Trumpeter Swan captive breeding pair program.

Trumpeter Swans can be found from Alaska, east to the Great Lakes, south to Arkansas and over to near the west coast. Within the U.S., the Rocky Mountain population has been in continual decline. The Pacific Flyway Council's Rocky Mountain Population Trumpeter Swan Implementation Plan seeks to halt this decline by increasing the number of breeding pairs in suitable habitat. The O'Dell Creek release, sponsored in part by Sacajawea and MT Audubon and coordinated by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, is part of this larger regional conservation effort. The 2014 release was the third of five such

releases planned to establish five nesting pairs in the Middle Madison.

The O'Dell Creek Headwaters site is amongst 540 acres of wetland and spring creek habitat restored or created in the Madison Valley. Establishing breeding pairs in the valley will increase the geographic range of Montana Trumpeter Swans, and will connect swan populations in other areas of MT as well as Idaho and Wyoming.

The Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) is the largest native North American waterfowl species. They can weigh up to 35 pounds, stand four feet tall, and have an impressive seven-foot wingspan. Cygnets are gray in color and will retain some gray feathers into their second year.



*-Bill Long and Jessica Kalinowski releasing a swan in O'Dell Creek*





**Sacajawea Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 1711**  
**Bozeman, MT 59771-1711**

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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 10<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the month articles will appear. Please send to: **Mary Cloud Ammons, 503 Bozeman, Bozeman MT 59715** or [newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org).

**Change of Address:** Please notify Sally MacDonald, 223-9167 or [membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org](mailto:membership@sacajaweaaudubon.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.sacajaweaaudubon.org/>

### *Mailing Address*

### **SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

President	Loreene Reid	600-6666	<a href="mailto:pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org">pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org</a>
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[www.mtaudubon.org](http://www.mtaudubon.org) For direct contact: [shoffman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:shoffman@mtaudubon.org)  
 Montana Bird Hotline: 406-721-9799 to report unusual or out-of-season birds

### **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: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_ \$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**  
**P.O. Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 59771-1711**  
**(N51)**

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