DECEMBER 2018

Sacajawea Audubon News

Sacajawea Audubon builds on an interest in birds to promote the conservation of our natural environment through enjoyment, education, and action

Calendar *at a* Glance DECEMBER 2018

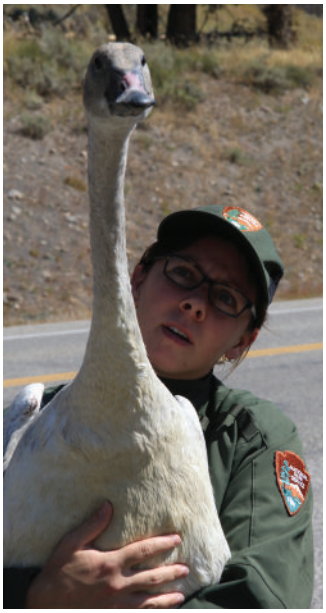
2	SAS Board Meeting at the Lehrkind Mansion
5	SAS Book Group Discussion
10	Special Year End Monthly Program and Bridger Raptor Project Raffle Drawing at the Ellen Theater
15	Bozeman Christmas Bird Count
16	Livingston Christmas Bird Count
19	Ennis Christmas Bird Count
23	Yellowstone Christmas Bird Count
26	Three Forks Christmas Bird Count
30	West Yellowstone Christmas Bird Count

JANUARY 2019

5	Ruby Valley Christmas Bird Count
16	SAS Book Group Discussion

Yellowstone's Forgotten Birds

December 10th at the Ellen Theater
Social at 6:30 pm | Program at 7:00 pm



YNP photo

"What we're seeing with Yellowstone birds is as dramatic as anything making headlines with wolves, grizzlies, and bison."
~ Doug Smith, Senior Wildlife Biologist, Yellowstone National Park

Long known for its large mammals, Yellowstone National Park has an abundance and diversity of birds too often overshadowed by grizzlies, wolves, elk and bison. Large numbers of songbirds flood in during springtime, as do common loons and many raptors. Others like golden eagles and trumpeter swans reside year-round. Either way, there are many bird riches in the world's first national park. Please come hear about how the park has recently expanded its songbird monitoring programs including becoming a MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survival) site—one of many across the US and Canada—that involves mist netting for the first time in the history of the park. New projects with common loons, trumpeter swans (with a graduate student at Montana State) and golden eagles (with University of Montana) will also be highlighted among other bird topics taking place in Yellowstone National Park.

Doug Smith, PhD is a Senior Wildlife Biologist in Yellowstone National Park. He supervises the wolf, bird and elk programs—formerly three jobs now combined into one under Doug's supervision. His original job was the Project Leader for the Yellowstone Wolf Project, which involved the reintroduction and restoration of wolves to Yellowstone National Park. He helped establish this project and position.

Doug received a B.S. degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Idaho in 1985. He has published a wide variety of journal articles and book chapters on beavers, wolves, and birds and co-authored two popular books on wolves (*The Wolves of Yellowstone* & *Decade of the Wolf*, which won the 2005 Montana book award for best book published in Montana) as well as publishing numerous popular articles. Doug published a third book, *Wolves on the Hunt*, in May 2015. His professional interests include wolf population dynamics, wolf-prey relationships, restoration of ecological processes, raptor conservation, and beaver population dynamics. He is a member of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Team, the Re-Introduction Specialist Group, and Canid Specialist Group for the IUCN. Besides wolves, birds and beavers, he is an avid canoeist preferring to travel mostly in the remote regions of northern Canada with his wife, Christine, and their two sons, Sawyer and Hawken.

Join Sacajawea Audubon, Monday, December 10th, for this special holiday program at the Ellen Theatre, 17 West Main Street, Bozeman. Doors open at 6:30 pm with a social followed by the program at 7:00 pm. This programs is free and open to the public (a suggested donation of $5 appreciated).

To learn more about Yellowstone birds, visit nps.gov/yell/learn/nature/birds.htm

BRIDGER RAPTORS PROJECT RAFFLE

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone

Email

Bridger Raptor Project Raffle

Be One of 2 Winners of a

Bridger Bowl 2018-19 Season Ski Pass ***($840 value ea.)***

or many other prizes

(see list of prizes at www.sacajaweaaudubon.org)

Tickets: $10 ea or 6 for $50

Drawing: 7 pm on December 10, 2018

At the Sacajawea Audubon's Program Meeting
Ellen Theatre, Bozeman

Sponsored by:
Sacajawea Audubon
Bridger Bowl

Support Bridger Mountain's Raptor Count, the largest concentration of autumnal migrant Golden Eagles known in the lower 48 states. Help Sacajawea and Montana Audubon continue this important research project, in our very own Bridger Mountains.

For more information visit: www.sacajaweaaudubon.org

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Note; if you have already purchased your season pass, Bridger Bowl will reimburse you if you win!

Win one of 2 Bridger Bowl Season Pass for 2018/2019

(value of $840 each)**. . .or a chance to win many more prizes!**

Buy your tickets for the Birdger Raptor Project Raffle! All proceeds support the Bridger Mountains Raptor Project, one of the most important localities to monitor migrating Golden Eagles in the western United States for the past 28 years. This project is critical to provide the data needed to assess population trends in Golden Eagles and other raptors.

Raffle tickets are $10 each or 6 for $50

NOTE: if you have already purchased your season pass, Bridger Bowl will reimburse you if you win!

The drawing will be held Dec. 10th, 2018 at the Sacajawea Audubon monthly program "Yellowstone's Forgotten Birds" by Doug Smith, which begins at 7 pm at the Ellen Theatre in downtown Bozeman.

To get your raffle tickets and see the list of prizes visit sacajaweaaudubon.org or email raffle@sacajaweaaudubon.org

You can also get your raffle tickets at Sacajawea Audubon's monthly program meeting on Monday, December 10th.

SUPPORT SAS: BUY A PIEROGI!

Come help support Sacajawea Audubon's conservation efforts while enjoying one of Bozeman's most beloved holiday events. **Vickie's Pierogies** will be donating 10% of the profits from the sale of her authentic, handmade pierogies during Downtown Bozeman's Christmas Stroll to Sacajawea Audubon's conservation projects. The stroll takes place on **December 1st from 4:30-7:30 pm.**

Oh Come all Ye Faithful Christmas Bird Counters!

Come join the fun on one of our area's Christmas Bird Counts. The Christmas counts, started in 1900, are an opportunity for beginning and expert birders to get together and enjoy 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.

For more information, contact the area count compilers. **Please Contact the area compiler before the count, as this will give them the opportunity to plan and organize the count before the count day.** Participation in all counts is free.

BOZEMAN

Saturday, December 15th

Compiler: John Parker (406) 586-5863
conundrumjp@gmail.com

Meet at Perkins Restaurant, 2505 W. Main St., Bozeman, between 7–7:30 am.

LIVINGSTON

Sunday, December 16th

Compiler: George Kelly (406) 220-0282
gjkingfisher@gmail.com

Meet at Pinky's, on Main Street in Livingston, between 7:30–8 am.

Wood Duck by Lou Ann Harris

ENNIS

Wednesday, December 19th

Compiler: Robin Wolcott (406) 581-5418
pajaros@wewolcotts.com *(email preferred)*

Meet at Yesterday's Café in the Ennis Pharmacy by 7:30 am. *(sooner for breakfast)*

YELLOWSTONE

Sunday, December 23rd

Compiler: Woody Martyn (406) 224-1476
woodymartyn@hotmail.com

Meet at the Yellowstone Grill, in Gardiner, at 7:00 am.

THREE FORKS

Wednesday, December 26th

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

Meet at Wheat Montana on US 287 exit 274 at 7:45 am or by 7:15 for breakfast

Lou Ann Harris

WEST YELLOWSTONE

Sunday, December 30th

Compiler: Brad Barth (406) 640-2628
barth.brad@gmail.com

Meet at the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center, in West Yellowstone at 8:30 am.

RUBY VALLEY

Saturday, January 5th

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

Meet at Fritt's Dream Bean Cafe, in Sheridan, at 7:45–8:15 am. Please let Tom know if you plan to eat breakfast at the cafe.

NOTE: cross country skiers are needed for some sections.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES UPDATE

Last spring the Education Committee decided that we would focus our energies on more hands-on experiences for children and put less energy toward the Audubon Adventures magazine kits. This decision was reached partly because after several years of promoting Audubon Adventures we were not getting more teachers to sign up and of those who had signed up the previous year not many were renewing the next year.

We will continue to provide the kits to any teachers who request them and we have seven teachers using the kits this academic year. If you know of any 3rd through 6th grade teachers whom may be interested, I have two kits I can drop by or they can order from audubonadventures.org.

Teachers and their students can also access the magazines online at the same website as well as a lot of fun activities and videos. I also have three variety packs, which would be great for an interested 3rd through 6th grade child. These packs contain one magazine on about 20 different nature topics.

Sincerely,

Hilary Johnson
(406) 599-1446
ralphhilary@gmail.com

NOVEMBER BIRD NOTES

During the last weeks before this area's lakes and ponds finally freeze over it is a great time to be out looking for rare birds while enjoying the last days of fall. This fall was exceptional for the number and variety of rare ducks and loons. While it's always an adventure to travel to some of the larger lakes, sometimes visiting your neighborhood pond will produce some big surprises.

On November 7th, Don Profota found a single **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Davis Lane Pond in northwest Bozeman. The following day, Don discovered three **White-winged Scoters** on Flanders Mill Road Pond in west Bozeman. Six White-winged Scoters were also seen October 30th at Harrison Reservoir, and two others on November 3rd–5th at Dailey Lake in Paradise Valley. This past month four different **Surf Scoters** were seen at Harrison Reservoir October 25th, November 5th, and November 9th. Two Surf Scoters were at Cottonwood Reservoir October 27th, and one on the Jefferson River near Willow Creek on November 9th.

But the really big scoter news this fall was the number of **Black Scoters**. The Montana Bird Records Committee considers a bird seen 20 or fewer times to be rare enough to require a rare bird report. Prior to 2017, any Black Scoter seen in Montana would have required a rare bird report for possible acceptance as a valid Montana record. So far this fall, 19 Black Scoters have been reported at eight locations across Montana. Twelve of these scoters were seen on local waters. On October 29th, Andrew Guttenberg found three Black Scoters on Davis Lane Pond, then on November 3rd Andrew, Tom Forwood, and Forrest Rowland discovered another Black Scoter at Dailey Lake. And then, incredibly, on the afternoon of November 8th, Matt Keefer saw eight Black Scoters on Glen Lake at the East Gallatin Recreation Area.

During the past month three **Pacific Loons** were in this area, including the loon that was reported in last month's Bird Sightings, which remained at Three Forks until October 28th. A Pacific Loon was spotted October 28th at Harrison Reservoir by Kim Obbink and Vic Fesolowitz, and finally another was seen November 5th at Dailey Lake by George Kelly and John Parker.

A **Red-throated Loon**—Montana's 23rd record—was found by John Parker along the east shore of Ennis Lake on November 9th.

A side note from Birds of Montana: *Montana's first record for Red-throated Loon was a bird discovered by P.D. Skaar at Ennis Lake on November 17th, 1965, and amazingly Skaar saw Montana's first Pacific Loon that same day at Ennis Lake.*

On October 19th, while at Mountain View Cemetery south of Manhattan, Sam Koenen and Roe Stripper found an uncommon and very late **Palm Warbler**.

The first winter finches had started to trickle into this area by early November with **Rosy Finches** seen in small numbers at several locations from north of Big Timber to Hyalite Creek during the first week of the month. A single **Common Redpoll** was at Jerry Taylor's feeders north of Big Timber on November 6th. Could we be in for an invasion of redpolls and other residents of the far north this winter?

~ By John Parker

Common Redpoll by Lou Ann Harris

Lou Ann Harris

2018 Bridger Project Summary

By Steve Hoffman

Sacajawea Audubon has just concluded its full-season count of migrating raptors atop the Bridger Mountains. This is the 28th consecutive season of this scientific project designed to monitor the population health and change of more than a dozen western raptor species (with a particular emphasis on Golden Eagles). These long-term counts have documented statistically significant declines in the Golden Eagle and Northern Goshawk, and long-term increases in the Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, and Broad-winged Hawk. These results suggest a long-term trend toward expansion of habitat or improvement in habitat quality for those species that are showing increases, and a widespread decline in habitat quality for species that are showing lower counts.

In 2018 the project experienced severe and prolonged foul weather, making counts extremely difficult or impossible for a significant portion of the season. Stormy weather and poor visibility may have impacted counts of Golden Eagles and Northern Goshawks most dramatically, due to the seasonality of these severe storm events (which were especially profound during the last week of September and the first half of October). Final counts for some of the key species were as follows:

- 1,004 Golden Eagles
- 242 Sharp-shinned Hawks
- 216 Cooper's Hawks
- 115 Red-tailed Hawks
- 87 American Kestrels
- 59 Bald Eagles
- 58 Northern Harriers
- 55 Rough-legged Hawks
- 21 Broad-winged Hawks
- 16 Peregrine Falcons
- 12 Prairie Falcons
- 12 Northern Goshawks
- 9 Merlins

The total number of raptors counted was 2,048 (the lowest since 2009), based upon 395 hours of observation between 27 August and 9 November.

We wish to thank more than 200 visitors who joined with our official counters (Adam Bradley, Alice Morris, and Bret Davis) to enjoy the migration. And, we are especially thankful for our funders of the project, including USDA Forest Service (Custer-Gallatin National Forest), Bridger Bowl Ski Area, NaturEner USA, Northwestern Energy, GCC Trident Cement Plant, Patagonia, Inc, Lehrkind Mansion Bed & Breakfast, Wild Birds Unlimited, Sola Café, Merlin Birding & Nature Tours, and many individual contributors. Local housing for the observers was provided by Lila Bishop, Elisabeth Swanson & Jerry Buckley. Volunteer observer assistance was generously provided by Paulette Epple and Matthew Keefer.

THANKS TO ALL!!

JOIN THE FLOCK & FLY HIGH TOGETHER

SAS Annual Local Membership Drive for 2019

If you enjoy our field trips, monthly programs or our conservation work, please join Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS). 100% of your dues will directly support SAS's educational and conservation programs.

Even if you belong to the National Audubon Society, we need your support through a Local SAS Membership. As a Sacajawea Audubon member, you'll enjoy the benefits of membership while knowing that your annual dues will be used locally, for conservation right here in your own neighborhood. You can choose from the following membership levels:

Basic Membership.....$25
Supporting Membership $50

SAS Members Are…..

- Protecting working lands for birds and other wildlife.
- Preserving and protecting bird species and their habitats.
- Supporting bird-friendly communities in Montana with our bird-friendly landscape program.
- Contributing to important environmental education programs for people of all ages and abilities on birds, wildlife and habitat.
- Supporting vital partnerships between other nonprofit environmental groups, citizens and local government to shape the health of our community.
- Advocating for important local and regional environmental issues.

SAS Members Enjoy:

- Free Monthly Keynote Speakers.
- Free guide to birding around the Gallatin Valley & beyond.
- Free member e-newsletters published nine times a year.
- Member-only discounts on educational courses, programs, special events, and other purchases.
- Opportunities to meet new people who share an interest in birds, wildlife, the environment, and conservation.
- Participating in citizen science projects.
- Free guided birding field trips.

While SAS is a chapter of both the National Audubon Society and Montana Audubon, your SAS membership does not include membership in the National Audubon Society. We are an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with its own board of directors, membership, budget and programs. We rely on financial support from local members to carry out our wide array of programs.

As we approach our 52th year, we hope you will join us in building on an interest in birds to promote the conservation of our natural environment through enjoyment, education and action. You can fill out the membership form below or join online at sacajaweaaudubon.org. ***Thank you!***

Sacajawea Audubon Society Membership

Individual or Family

☐ Basic Membership $25

☐ Supporting Membership $50
(Supporting local conservation & education project)

☐ Additional Donation .....$_____
- ☐ *Bridger Raptor Study*
- ☐ *Education*
- ☐ *Wetland Capital Campaign*

Name _____

Address _____
(Street or PO Box)

_____ _____ _____
(City) *(State)* *(Zip)*

Phone (____) _____

Email _____

❖ Sacajawea Audubon News is sent by email. There is a $10 annual fee for a paper copy mailed to you.
☐ *I would like a paper newsletter mailed to me and have included an additional $10 to cover the annual cost.*

❖ We do not share your information except with Montana Audubon, so your contact information is safe with us.

Mail this form with 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!

newsletter 11/18

January 16th SAS Book Group Discussion: A Sand County Almanac

The book for January 16th is a classic in the world of conservation: *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold. Published in 1949, *A Sand County Almanac* has inspired many and continues to inspire today. In one passage, Leopold envisions the proper relationship between humans and the land:

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land to survive the impact of mechanized man. . . .

This is a good time for those who have never read the *Almanac* to dive in and for those who have read it to revisit this important and moving work.

The book group meets on Wednesdays at Hope Lutheran Church from 4:00–5:15 pm. All SAS members are welcome to join the group. The schedule for books and meetings is available on the SAS website.

If you want to be on the book group mailing list, email Adele Pittendrigh at adele.pittendrigh@gmail.com.

Madison River Rd. in the Fog by Lou Ann Harris

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Vice President	John Edwards johnedwards@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Member at Large	Travis Kidd traviskidd@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Debi Naccarto debinaccarto@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Stephanie Nelson stephanienelson@sacajaweaaudubon.org

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MSU Student Leadership	Jackson St. Clair jacksonstclair@sacajaweaaudubon.org

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Conservation Chair	Paulette Epple conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Education Chair	Travis Kidd traviskidd@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Bird Sightings	John Parker birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Newsletter	Stephanie Nelson newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Monthly Program	Carl Roth programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Website	Stephanie Nelson stephanienelson@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Membership	Loreene Reid membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Hospitality	Sherry Staub hospitality@sacajaweaaudubon.org

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 Monthly Newsletter is available electronically to all Sacajawea Audubon Society members September through May. Members and non-members can receive a mailed paper newsletter for an annual $10 subscription fee. Please send your check to the address above.

Deadline for article submission is the 15th of the month preceding the month the articles will appear. Send articles electronically to Stephanie Nelson at: 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: sacajaweaaudubon.org

COFFEE . . .

Wouldn't you like to wake every morning knowing you're doing your part to preserve important bird habitat?

We think it's such an important choice that we've organized a **Sacajawea Audubon Coffee Club** to make buying and enjoying the right bird-friendly coffee a breeze. And if you're not already drinking shade-grown organic coffee, you'll be thrilled by the rich, clean flavor of Birds & Beans coffees. Birds & Beans coffees are certified as bird-friendly by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Birds and Beans is, in fact, the only coffee that is Organic, Fair Trade and Certified Shade Grown! That means that not only are the beans grown without pesticides or herbicides, and by workers who are fairly compensated, but NO rain forests have been destroyed. This coffee is not grown in the understory of a previously cut rain forest. Rain forests are a critical habitat for migratory song birds. No Habitat = No Songbirds.

So, if you enjoy the fresh brewed aroma and flavor of coffee every day…now you know that you are ensuring the future of those bird hikes you also love with every cup.

Birds and Beans is allowing our club to order coffee directly online with NO shipping costs and at a discounted price to Sacajawea Audubon Members and any other conservation group in Bozeman through the Bird City, Wisconsin Coffee Club website! This is not something that Birds and Beans usually does, but given the huge interest and appreciation for birds in our area, they are going to make this possible for us!

Visit birdsandbeanscoffee.com/birdcity and enter the password birdsmatter.

NOTE: this is only good on 5 lb packages, frac packs, or a case of six 12 oz packs. Note also that products on the page are limited to ground or whole bean; the default ground is medium. (If you prefer other options, you can always order the coffee on your own from the B & B website but without the discount and free shipping!)

Questions? Contac Sherry Staub at (563) 370-0757 or email scstaub@mchsi.com