SacajaweaAudubonNews

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 6th	SAS Book Club Meeting
December 11th	SAS Monthly Meeting
December 11th	Raptor Raffle
December 16th - January 4th	Annual Christmas Bird Counts

LOVE BIRDS?
BUY A LOCAL MEMBERSHIP
TO SUPPORT
SACAJAWEA AUDUBON!

Sacajawea Audubon Presents Owl Expert Denver Holt
The Owls of Montana

Monday December 11th, 2017 at 7pm
Ellen Theater
Downtown Bozeman

Owls are arguably the most widely recognized group of animals in the world. They occur on all continents except Antarctica and have populated the most remote groups of islands in the world (i.e. Hawaii). Owl lore, myth, and stories have been verbally passed along in many native cultures throughout the world.

Join Sacajawea Audubon on December 11th at the Ellen Theatre in Bozeman for a special evening with owl expert, Denver Holt. "The Owls of Montana" will focus on owl species that occur in Montana only, or the United States and Canada. He will discuss the differences between the two owl families and also cover a general overview of owl identification, natural history, breeding and non-breeding biology, evolutionary adaptations, habitat affinities, and conservation.

Owls are difficult to find, however, if you learn a little about the breeding seasons, and owl vocalizations you will be able to find owls. Because voice is the major means of communication among owls, we will review the primary songs. Based upon Denver Holt's 35 years of surveying and researching owls in Montana and elsewhere, we will outline survey techniques. These techniques can be used to increase your chances of finding owls for scientific reasons, or just enjoyment.

Denver Holt is a wildlife researcher and graduate of the University of Montana. He is founder and president of the Owl Research Institute and the Ninepipes Wildlife Research Center, a nonprofit organization located in Charlo, Montana. As a dedicated field researcher, Holt believes that long-term field studies are the primary means to understanding trends in wildlife populations. Since 1978, Holt's research focus has been owls and their ecology. He has published about 100 papers and technical documents, including four species accounts for the *Birds of North America* project. His research on Snowy Owls has been showcased on documentaries for National Geographic Explorer, NHK Natural History Unit of Japan, and the Norwegian Broadcasting Company Natural History Unit, and the focus of the British Broadcasting Company's (BBC) documentary series called *Frozen Earth.*

To learn more about Holt and his efforts in wildlife research, education, and conservation, visit www.owlinstitute.org. Please join SAS for a social at 6:30. The program will begin at 7 p.m. A suggested donation of $5 will help Sacajawea Audubon offset the cost of renting the Ellen.

Raffle for the Raptors - Drawing December 11th!

Sacajawea Audubon is selling raffle tickets to win one of 2 Bridger Bowl Season Passes for 2017-2018. Raffle tickets are $10 each or 6 for $50. Even if you have already purchased a season pass, if you win, Bridger Bowl will reimburse you. If you don't ski, you can give your pass to a family member or friend.

The money raised will go to help fund our annual Bridger Raptor Survey, which just wrapped up it's 27th season. Raptors are counted each year between the end of August until early November on top of the Bridger Ridge. This long-term study is critical in the study of Golden Eagles and their steady decline in numbers.

Tickets are available at Wild Birds Unlimited off of N. 19th. Drawing will be held Dec. 11th at the Sacajawea Audubon program at the Ellen Theatre. Tickets will be available for sale before the drawing.

SAS Book Group to Read *Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival*

Winter World by Bernd Heinrich wins much praise for good science, good writing and illustrations by the author. Heinrich is the author of many books about nature, including "*Mind of the Raven*." *Winter World* explores "staggering evolutionary innovations" that allow animals to survive winter. The Book Group will discuss *Winter World* at Hope Lutheran Church on January 17, 2018, from 5:30-6:45. Everyone is welcome. If you are attending for the first time please email Adele Pittendrigh. adele.pittendrigh@gmail.com. And don't forget to join the SAS Bookclub December 6th for a discussion on *The Hidden Life of Trees*.

Book Group Schedule 2017-2018
December 6, 2017 The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate, Peter Wohleben (2016)
January 17, 2018 Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival, Bernd Heinrich (2006)
March 7, 2018 The Genius of Birds, Jennifer Ackerman (2016)
April 18, 2018 The Bone Museum: Travels in the Lost Worlds of Dinosaurs and Birds, Wayne Grady (2000)

Montana Audubon Workshop on Invasive Streamside Trees a Success

Marias River, Photo Courtesy of John Lambing

In late October, Montana Audubon hosted a first ever, two-day workshop for professionals involved with management and research of two highly invasive species: Russian olive and/or salt cedar, along Montana waterways. These Eurasian trees have begun to seriously threaten biologically valuable, native cottonwood-willow habitats in Montana particularly on some of our eastern rivers. Thirty individuals from 22 agencies and entities shared, networked, and planned for future activities. Ultimately, we will launch a new network in Montana to work on riparian forest issues. To learn more, and view some of the results from this workshop, visit: http://mtaudubon.org/birds-science/bird-conservation/montana-audubon-river-initiative/conservation-workshop/

Over 100 Years of Symptom Science

Come Join for the Annual Christmas Bird Counts!

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.

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 16th**
Compiler: John Parker
(406) 586-5863 conundrumjp@gmail.com
Meet at Perkins Restaurant at 2505 West Main Street
Between 7-7:30am

W. Yellowstone **Sunday, December 17th**
Compiler: Brad Barth
(406) 640-2628 barth.brad@gmail.com
Meet at the Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center
At 8:30am

Livingston **Sunday, December 17th**
Compiler: George Kelly
(406) 220-0282 gjkingfisher@gmail.com
Meet at Pinky's on Main Street
Between 7:30-8am

Yellowstone **Sunday, December 17th**
Compiler: Woody Martyn
(406) 224-1476
woodymartyn@hotmail.com
Meet at the Yellowstone Grill in Gardiner
At 7:00am

Ennis **Wednesday, December 20th**
Compiler: Robin Wolcott
(406) 581-5418 pajaros@wewocotts.com
Email preferred
Meet at Yesterday's Cafe, Ennis Pharmacy
By 7:30am or sooner for breakfast

Three Forks **Tuesday, December 26th**
Compiler: Tom Forwood
(406) 570-6432 tforwood@mt.gov
Email preferred
Meet at Wheat Montana, US 287 exit 274
At 7:45am or by 7:15am for breakfast

Ruby Valley **Thursday, January 4th**
Compiler: Tom Forwood
(406) 570-6432 tforwood@mt.gov
Email preferred
Meet at Fritt's Dream Bean Cafe, in Sheridan
At 7:45-8:15am
Let Tom know if you plan to eat breakfast at the cafe
Note: cross country skiers are needed for some sections

Sacajawea Audubon Society Participates in the MEA/MFT Educator's Conference

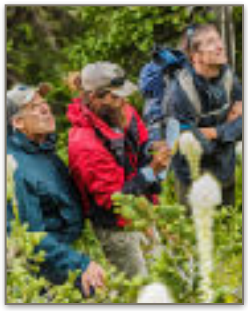
The Education Committee, Chaired by Hilary Johnson has been actively promoting the Audubon Adventures Program to the teachers within the service area of the Sacajawea Audubon Society. As part of that outreach, Hilary Johnson and Peggy Kimmet prepared and presented a program at the MEA/MFT Educator's Conference in Missoula this past October. (Hilary was unable to attend because of illness.) This conference is attended by teachers from all over the Montana. It is one of the largest statewide educator's conferences in the US.

Titled, "Audubon Adventures: It's not Just for the Birds", the presentation met the educational goals to give teachers hands-on time with the publication; to provide brainstorming opportunities for classroom application; and to provide an overview of the on-line resources that are part of Audubon Adventures. The class wrapped up with an activity which illustrated how pollination actually happens. Participating teachers were able to earn renewal credits for their teaching certification renewal. Two of these presentations were offered. One of them was offered in conjunction with The Montana Environmental Education Association sessions. They were pleased to have our addition to their sectionals. The other was part of the general sessions. In all, a total of 16 teachers and outdoor educators attended the sessions. The number is initially disappointing. However, attendees were from all four corners of the state: Troy, Glendive, Miles City, Sheridan. They also were from Kalispell, Billings, Missoula and Great Falls. They all know about the Audubon Adventures program and how to contact their local Audubon Society for further information.

Hilary and Peggy are hoping that this 'pollination' of ideas and information will bear fruit. We would like to thank Travis Kidd for use of his laptop, to Lureen Reed and the Board for financial and moral support for this project, to the Montana Environmental Education Association for the use of their hospitality room (and chocolate), and the MEA/MFT Association for encouraging us to participate.

-Hillery Johnson
Sacajawea Audubon Society, Education Committee Chair

"Swifting" – Up High and Under Waterfalls: Training the Citizen's Eye



Since the summer of 2013, Montana Audubon has engaged citizen scientists in searching for one of Montana's least understood species, the Black Swift. When we started these efforts, just seven nest sites were known in the state, and it was clear the bird remained among the Species of Greatest Inventory Need. Nesting amongst rocky niches, and under hidden waterfalls, locating the colonial-breeding Black Swift remains challenging even to a trained observer's eye. In our first four years of surveys, efforts by Montana Audubon staff and a dozen volunteers turned up just three new nesting sites. Focused surveys in Glacier National Park confirmed six sites there in 2013.

At the start of the 2017 field season, individual efforts and those by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, yielded 17 nesting sites, state-wide. We were making progress, albeit it slow. In an effort to speed up our rate of discovery, we took a different approach in 2017: hosting two in-person field and classroom trainings. Twenty six individuals ranging from agency personnel to seasonal technicians and volunteers joined us in Glacier National Park and Holland Lake for and intensive, two-day introduction to these elusive creatures. Trainees spent over two hours together working on the survey protocol, learning how to navigate the physical demands of the field, and getting introduced to the unique biology of this extremely fast study species.

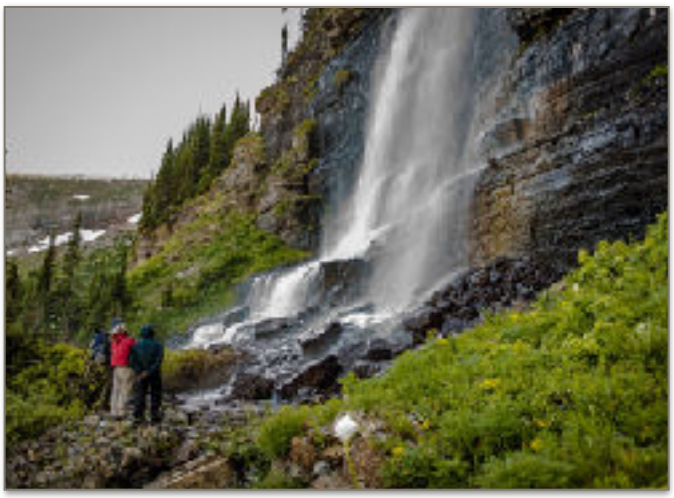
As dusk approached each night, we headed to the falls to practice survey techniques. Trainees worked in small groups to score waterfall habitat characteristics such as height, type, flow volume, 'commanding view over the surrounding terrain', moss availability, shading of nest niches, and falls' aspect – all qualities known to influence the likelihood a waterfall will be used by Black Swifts. Talking through each group's scores together helps hone the individual observer's eye and adds an important element of objectivity when moving through the scoring process.

Standardizing data collection in this way is exactly what the state needs to carry out surveys that to effectively determine a specie's conservation status. We shared as much as possible about developing a good search image, including looking for white-wash, and scouring the waterfall face for "mailbox–sized" nooks where nests may be hidden. Despite the fact that the LunchCreek waterfall had been occupied by swifts in 2016, none were found during this summer's training – and no birds turned up during later surveys this summer. Holland Falls on the other hand provided just the search image the trainees needed, as birds were observed almost a dozen times streaming out from the waterfall' s sides, down the creek, and out over Holland Lake. The few fast glimpses allowed trainees to observe the lightning-like speed at which an adult Black Swift enters its nest location, and made clear a point we reiterated often during the training, "just don't look away".

It is safe to say almost everyone that attended these trainings became hooked on how exciting it is to be in the presence such an amazing and uncommon creature. After the trainings, we coordinated with volunteers to survey 18 waterfalls, resulting in the location of four new Black Swift colonies. Two of these are located in the park and two are outside, including the first find in the Cabinet Mountains. Volunteers logged over 400 hours and drove more than 1,400 miles during the search – which doesn't end this year: this cadre of "swifters" is ready to hit the trails again next year!

Between funded surveys and citizen science, 2017 was a year of great discovery, and our collective efforts have doubled the known number of sites to a total of 34. There remains much to learn about Black Swift conservation but we're working in the right direction with an amazing crew of people. Funding for these trainings was provided by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Glacier National Park Conservancy, the LEAW Family Foundation, the Cadeau Foundation, and individual donors. Many thanks!

-Amy Seaman
Montana Audubon Conservation Program Manager



Bird Notes

Orange-crowned Warbler

The end of October and the beginning of November is the time of year when we see the last of the birds that are migrating to the south. Meanwhile migrants from the north are arriving and are starting to figure out where to settle in for the winter. As many of our members may have observed, there has been a regional invasion of Blue Jays across the northern Rockies this fall. In our area the first Blue Jays started being reported the second week of October, and are continuing to be seen well into November. These unexplained invasions occur every few years, with many of the Blue Jays over wintering in towns across western Montana.

This fall hasn't been especially mild but on November 14th George Kelly saw three **Mountain Bluebirds** lingering at the north end of Paradise Valley. George also has three **Blue Jays** visiting his Livingston yard.

On October 31st, while walking the Highland Glen trails on the east side of Bozeman, Matt Keefer saw what he at first sight thought was a Northern Shrike. On closer examination the bird turned out to be a **Northern Mockingbird**. These two species have quite similar wing patterns and body shape when seen in flight, and can easily be misidentified. Northern Mockingbird is not a species that is typically found in Montana but does turn up across the state with some regularity. Oddly, unlike many strays that are seen during migration periods, the ten or so local Northern Mockingbird records are scattered across the year, including several seen during the winter.

In mid October Katy Duffy, who lives in Gardiner, had a significant fallout of birds. Among the various birds in Katy's yard were a very late **Townsend's Warbler** that she photographed October 16th, and a **Tennessee Warbler** she saw on October 14th. This Tennessee Warbler sighting is the latest fall record for Montana, beating the previous late date by six days. Interestingly, the previous late record for this locally uncommon warbler was in Livingston. The **Orange-crowned Warbler** that Beth Madden spotted in her south Bozeman yard November 3rd was yet another record late date for Montana.

Swamp Sparrow

Swamp Sparrows occur sporadically during migration across Montana, and locally the few sightings have all been during fall migration. This fall Tom Forwood was fortunate to find two **Swamp Sparrows**. The first Swamp Sparrow Tom saw was near the Willow Creek Cemetery on October 22nd, and the second one was located on the east side of the Three Forks Ponds.

If this November is any indication, this winter is shaping up to be a big year in Montana for Common Redpolls, with many already being seen across the region. Will this winter also be a big year for all the irruptive northern finches?

-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@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Sacajawea Audubon Society Officers and Committee Chairs

President	Loreene Reid	600-6666	pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Vice President	Lou Ann Harris	600-3585	louann@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Treasurer	Janne Hayward	587-6124	treas@sacajawea audubon.org
Secretary	John Edwards	581-0877	sec@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Education Chair	**OPEN**		
Field trips, Bird Count andBird Sightings	John Parker	586-5863	birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Conservation Chair	Lou Ann Harris	600-3585	conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Hospitality/Coffee	**OPEN**		
Membership Records	**OPEN**		
Newsletter Ed./Design	Mary Cloud Ammons	600-0301	newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Program Chair	Carl Roth		programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Publicity Chair	**OPEN**		
Chapter Rep. to State	Mike Vivion		mikevivion@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Webmaster	Lou Ann Harris	600-3585	louann@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Website Updates	Stephanie Nelson	587-3052	s.n.mayfly@gmail.com
Audubon Adventures	Hillary Johnson		ralphhilary@gmail.com

Board members	Chris Nixon	christopherfnixon@yahoo.com
	Sharon Hanton	sharonhanton@sacajaweaaudubon.org
	Mike Vivion	mikevivion@sacajaweaaudubon.org
	Adele Pittendrigh	adelepittendrigh@sacajaweaaudubon.org
	Paulette Epple	pauletteepple@sacajaweaaudubon.org
	Travis Kidd	travis@sacajaweaaudubon.org
	Billy Burton	billy@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Honorary Board Member Peter Norlander norlander@q.com

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

Change Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid Bozeman. MT 59771
Permit No. 106

Mailing Address

Sacajawea Audubon Society, affiliated with the National Audubon Society, meets on the second Monday of each month, October through May.

Sacajawea Audubon News is sent to all Sacajawea Audubon Society members monthly October through May. Deadline is the 15th of the month preceding the month articles will appear. Please send to: **Mary Cloud Ammons, 2742 E. Table Rock Road, Boise ID 83712** or **newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org**.

Change of Address:
Please notify 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/

Sacajawea Audubon Society

Membership

____Basic Membership————$25

____Supporting Membership-——$50

Additional Donation of $_____

You may renew or join online on our website: http://www. http://sacajaweaaudubon.org/

Name_____

Street Address_____

City_____

State_____ **Zip Code**_____

Phone_____ - _____ - _____

Email_____
SAS does not share email addresses with anyone except Montana Audubon, so your address is safe with us.

Mail this form with your check to:
Sacajawea Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 59771-1711

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

The Sacajawea Audubon Society Newsletter is Printed on 100% Recycled Paper