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

Feb 8th	SAS Monthly Meeting
March 5th	Madison River IBA Survey
March 11th - 12th	Raptor ID Workshop and Fieldtrip
March 31	Habitat Connections
June 3rd - 5th	Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival

Madison River IBA Survey

The next Madison River IBA survey will be held **March 5, 2016**! Anyone interested in helping, please contact Paulette Epple at bigskyepples@msn.com. Hope you can help SAS with this important initiative!

Avian Roles
From Behaviors to Similarities

Monday Feb 8th, 2016 at 7pm
Hope Lutheran Church
2152 W. Graf Street in Bozeman

Join Sacajawea Audubon for our February 8th program that will feature nature photographer, Carol Polich. Well published throughout the west, locally, & internationally with her photos and adventure travel stories, she will present an exciting, visual and musical lecture on bird behavior and similarities between birds spanning a variety of continents.

Polich's photos are also exhibited in 2 published books: "Portrait of Paradise" which covers the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem took 14 years of film work and published through Farcountry Press (Helena, 2007); with her many travels throughout southern Africa from 1987-2010, a mammal survival behaviour book idea was accepted by Random Struik Publishing, Capetown with the result being "Wildlife of Southern Africa" (2010). The photos cover 21 years of diligent photography.

Sacajawea Audubon meets every 2nd Monday of the month, September through May. Our meetings are held at Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf (off of S. 19th). Come for the social beginning at 6:30 p.m. A short chapter meeting starts at 7 p.m. with the program following after. Our programs are free and open to the public.

Raptor Identification Workshop and Field Trip
March 11th and 12th

(Presented by: *Steve Hoffman*, Executive Director, MT Audubon and founder of HawkWatch International)

Have you ever wanted to sharpen your raptor identification skills? If so, this is the workshop for you! On Friday evening Steve will provide a detailed discussion of the identification and natural history of all raptor (e.g., hawks, eagles, falcons, etc.) species wintering in the Gallatin Valley. Steve's illustrated talk will include a description of the many plumage variations (including subspecies and color forms, as well as age and sex variations) of the more common and observable species. Helpful behavioral clues will also be incorporated. Eagles, falcons and the "buteo" hawks (such as Red-tailed Hawks) will be emphasized. Participants will then go into the field (north of Bozeman) on Saturday to practice their newly-developed skills. Steve's presentation will be especially valuable for "intermediate" and "advanced" raptor watching enthusiasts, although beginners will also find this workshop quite helpful.

The Friday night presentation will start at 7 PM and last till 9 PM, in the Bozeman Public Library's small conference room.

Saturday morning's field trip will meet at the Museum of the Rockies at 8:30 am, and leave at 8:45. Be sure to dress for the weather and bring any necessary drinks or snacks for this 4-5 hour trip. If you have a spotting scope that you can bring, that would be helpful.

There is a $35 fee for Sacajawea Audubon members, $15 for participants under age 25, or $55 for non-members (the $55 includes a $20 Sacajawea Audubon membership). There is a 20 person limit for the workshop and field trip. Advance reservation and payment is required. For more information and to make reservations please call John Parker at 586-5863 or e-mail birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

Christmas Bird Count Results

Bozeman

Sora

The Bozeman count had 69 species, which is one short of the all time count record. A total of 16,496 birds were about 1,000 shy of the most individual birds ever seen. The lower Canada Goose numbers this year would be the difference. Though no new birds were added this year, a **Pileated Woodpecker** was seen during count week. Several birds seldom seen on the count were tallied, including a **Sora** that was seen for only the 3rd time, **Lesser Scaup** was seen for the 4th time, and **Barrow's Goldeneye** for the 5th time.

There were many new high counts for individual species. It was an especially good year for waterfowl and gallinaceous birds as there were new high counts for Green-winged Teal (27), Gadwall (14), Common Goldeneye (98), Gray Partridge (212), Ring-necked Pheasant (314), Ruffed Grouse (6), Wild Turkey (40). Other high counts included Rock Pigeon (1022), Hairy Woodpecker (25), Northern Flicker (25), Black-capped Chickadee (601), White-throated Sparrow (2), and House Sparrow (2897).

Ennis

Green-tailed Towhee

The Ennis count had 68 total species, with 3,920 individual birds counted. A **Green-tailed Towhee** which is a new species for the count, and the rarest bird seen on any of the local counts this year, brings the total number of species seen on the Ennis count to 131. There was only one additional species (**Canvasback**) seen during count week. A **Snow Goose** was seen for only the second time but sadly it had a broken wing. **Cassin's Finch** had only been seen twice before but this was the fourth sighting of **Rusty Blackbird** and **Virginia Rail**. Mallard, Common Goldeneye, Bald Eagle, Black-billed Magpie, Black-capped Chickadee and House Sparrow remain the only species that have been observed on all 56 counts. There were high counts of Gray Partridge (87), American Kestrel (3), Merlin (2), Prairie Falcon (6) and Collared Dove (134).

Three Forks

Rusty Blackbird

Three Forks had a record high count of 68 species, and second highest count of individuals with a total of 15,188. A **White-throated Sparrow** was seen for the first time on the count. A few of the rarer species included, **Canyon Wren** 4th time, **Marsh Wren** 5th time, **American Coot** 5th time, and **Rusty Blackbird** for the 6th time.

The Three Forks count produced numerous record high counts including Gadwall (8), Gray Partridge (245), Bald Eagle (62), Northern Harrier (18), Sharp-shinned Hawk (11), Eurasian Collared Dove (640), Great Horned Owl (6), Hairy Woodpecker (6), Downy Woodpecker (24), Northern Flicker (89), Merlin (5), Black-billed Magpie (586), Common Raven (398), American Robin (488), Western Meadowlark (14), and House Finch (267).

West Yellowstone

Great Gray Owl

The final numbers aren't in for the West Yellowstone count, but the count compiler Brad Barth was excited to have a close encounter with a **Great Gray Owl** during the day. All of this area's counts had good numbers of Common Redpolls.

While none of the Christmas counts had White-winged Crossbills, a single female **White-winged Crossbill** turned up at Roxanna McLaughlin's feeder near Bozeman Pass for the week around the New Year.

-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

Field Trips
June 3-5, 2016 Missoula, Montana

During the winter months, many birders find themselves dreaming of long summer days chasing diverse species of our feathered friends across beautiful Montana landscapes. Remember, it's not too early to begin planning your summer birding adventures! When migration season begins in earnest, come join us in Missoula for **Montana Audubon's 16th Annual Bird Festival, this year co-hosted by Five Valleys Audubon, June 3 - 5 at the Holiday Inn Downtown at the Park.**

We have over 20 field trips planned for each day! — guided by knowledgeable birders and naturalists familiar with the species and their habitats in the Missoula area. Here is just a brief sampling of some of those trips to contemplate as you anticipate the upcoming Bird Festival:

Bass Creek
This trip will explore upland meadows (including irrigated hayfields), foothill forests and riparian habitat. The primary goal of the trip is to observe a large breeding colony of bobolinks, and renew our knowledge of bobolink ecology. Companion species in the fields are savannah sparrow, common yellowthroat, Wilson's snipe, red-winged and Brewer's blackbirds. Species observed in the riparian portion on past field trips include; least and willow flycatchers, warbling vireo, northern waterthrush, American redstart, Bullock's oriole, song sparrow, spotted sandpiper, belted kingfisher, and several species of ducks. We may also visit with local landowners to discuss conservation projects.

Pattee Canyon - Sam Braxton Trail
This field trip will follow a three-mile loop on a National Recreation Trail through ponderosa pine, western larch and Douglas fir forests with an elevation gain of 300 feet. Possible specialty birds include Clark's nutcracker, Steller's and gray jays, three-toed woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, Williamson's sapsucker, brown creeper, red crossbill, and pine grosbeak.

Upsata Lake – Monture Creek
This trip through the Ovando Valley will include a drive up Woodworth Road to Upsata Lake, looking for bobolinks, sandhill cranes, long-billed curlews, trumpeter swans, common loons, warblers, and a variety of ducks. We'll walk around part of the lake, birding the prairie potholes and surrounding grasslands. If time permits, we will drive to Monture Creek Campground and look for riparian and forest species such as American redstart, ruby- and golden-crowned kinglets, pileated woodpecker, and perhaps an American dipper.

Keep watch in early March: Festival Registration Brochures with all field trip information, speakers and schedules will be in the mail, and the online system for registration will be active.

For more information please contact Montana Audubon Bird Festival Coordinator, Cathie Erickson, cerickson@mtaudubon.org, or call (406) 443-3949.

Habitat Connections

Habitat Connections: Exploring Your Local Environment through Birds and Citizen Science is a free training program designed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to help all types of educators build science skills while inspiring young people to connect to local habitats, explore biodiversity, and engage in citizen science projects. Montana was chosen as one of five states to participate in a pilot test of this curriculum for informal educators, and, as such, will receive free training and curriculum guides valued at $100 for 20 Montana educators.

The Habitat Connections training will be held in Bozeman this spring (possibly on March 31). The workshop lasts approximately 6 hours and will introduce participants to a 7-lesson curriculum developed by Cornell and appropriate for youth in grades 3-8. Each participant will get a copy of the curriculum guide to keep and will be expected to implement the curriculum with a group of youth and submit some evaluation data to Cornell. Workshop participants will also get additional ongoing support from Cornell. It takes about 10 hours to implement the full curriculum with a youth group, so it would be perfect for a summer camp or regular program in which they have regular contact with the same group of kids. No birding experience is necessary, although birders of all experience levels will find value in the online and printed curriculum materials and activities.

The training is sponsored by the Montana Girls STEM Collaborative Project, Montana Environmental Educators Association and MSU Extended University.

Contact Suzi Taylor at 406-994-7957 if you are interested in attending the training in March and working with a group of youth.

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

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Mailing Address

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 15th of the month preceding the month articles will appear. Please send to: **Mary Cloud Ammons, 503 Bozeman, Bozeman MT 59715** or **newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org**.

Change of Address: Please notify Karin Jennings at **587-2279** or **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 Officers and Committee Chairs

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Field trips, Bird Count and Bird Sightings	John Parker	586-5863	birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Membership Application

- National, State and Chapter Audubon membership
- 6 issues of ***Audubon*** magazine
- Monthly SAS newsletter September through May
- Support of National & local Audubon conservation efforts

____ $20 Introductory membership
____ Additional donation $ _____*

***All additional donations go directly to your Sacajawea Audubon Chapter.**

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip:_____
Email: _____

____ I will go green: Please send me the Sacajawea Audubon newsletter by E-mail only. (Add email address above.)

Mail your check and application to:
Sacajawea Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
P.O Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 59771-1711 (C5ZN510Z)

I am interested in volunteering for:
____ Bird Surveys
____ Assist with educational activities
____ Invasive plant removal
____ Newsletter or website articles
____ Help with refreshments at meetings
____ Participate in chapter Birdathon

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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

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