# SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

February 2017

## Calendar at a Glance

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|---|---|
| Feb 13th | SAS Meeting |
| Feb 25th & March 18th | SAS Field Trips |
| March 1st & March 4th | Raptor ID Workshop & Field Trip |
| March 9th | SAS Bookclub |
| Feb 23rd - 24th & March 2nd - 3rd | Bird Photography Class (Level I) |
| March 8th - 11th | Bird Photography Class (Level II) |
| June 9th - 11th | MT Audubon Annual Festival |

## Wildlife and Their Wild Land Homes Around the World

**Monday February 13th, 2016 at 7pm**
**Hope Lutheran Church**
**2152 W. Graf Street in Bozeman**

Wildlife, especially the particularly sensitive birds, can not live without healthy secure wild land. Protecting and conserving wild land habitat is the first requirement for the continued survival of all creatures. SAS welcomes Tom Murphy for a presentation and slide show of his wild land and wildlife photography from around the world over the last 30 years showing the beauty and truth of our wild earth.

Tom Murphy was raised on a 7500 acre cattle ranch in western South Dakota and graduated with honors from Montana State University in 1984 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Anthropology.

Tom's interest in photography began in 1972 and in 1978 he established a professional career in photography when he moved to Livingston, Montana and built a studio there. Through Wilderness Photography Expeditions, which he established in 1986, Tom built an internationally respected photography seminar series teaching natural history photography primarily in Yellowstone Park. His photographs have been used, both editorially and commercially, in numerous regional, national, and international publications including *Life*, *Architectural Digest*, *National Geographic*, *Audubon*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *Esquire* and others. He was Cameron Diaz's guide in Yellowstone for an MTV project and for Martha Stewart for her television show. He photographed for Meredith Brokaw's cookbook, *Big Sky Cooking*.

His first book *Silence and Solitude: Yellowstone's Winter Wilderness* won a 2002 Montana Book Award, and the accompanying video, produced by Montana PBS, earned an Emmy nomination. In July 2010, he completed a set of books named *The Seasons of Yellowstone* that includes four volumes: *The Light of Spring*, *The Abundance of Summer* , *The Comfort of Autumn*, and *The Spirit of Winter* (Crystal Creek Press). He is featured in "Landscape Photography: American Master Photographers on Their Art" published July 2015.

PBS Nature's show "Christmas in Yellowstone", airs nationally and internationally and features Tom's winter photography and some of his backcountry skiing stories.

Tom's latest film "The Four Seasons of Yellowstone" will be aired on PBS March 13th, 2017.

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

# SAS Field Trips: Central Park Pond Waterfowl

**Two trips: February 25th and March 18th**
**Leader: Mike Vivion** mikevivion@sacajaweaaudubon.org **406-210-8071**

Join us on these short field trips to the Central Park Pond (just west of Belgrade) for some great views of waterfowl in their pristine breeding plumage. We'll see several species of waterfowl, including Mallard (of course), Goldeneye (with luck, both species), Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, and several other species, as well as both Trumpeter and Tundra Swans and Canada Geese. If you want to sharpen your waterfowl ID skills, this is a great opportunity to see lots of species in breeding plumage.

For both the February 25 and March 18 trips, meet at Museum of the Rockies at 8:30 AM to car pool, or if you live on the west side of town or Belgrade, meet us at Four Corners at 8:45 AM. Approximately four hours maximum.

**12 person limit**
**Please contact Mike to reserve a spot.**

# Raptor Identification Workshop and Field Trip March 1st and 4th

**Presented by: Steve Hoffman, founder of HawkWatch International**

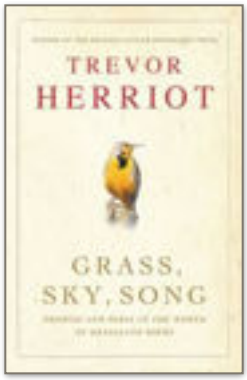
*Photo by David McNicholas*

Have you ever wanted to sharpen your raptor identification skills? If so, this is the workshop for you! On Wednesday 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 **Wednesday** night presentation will start at 6:30 PM and last till 8:45 PM, in the Bozeman Public Library's small conference room. **Saturday** morning's field trip will meet at the Museum of the Rockies at 8:15 am, and leave at 8:30. 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 you can bring, that would be helpful.

There is a $40 fee for current Sacajawea Audubon members, and just $15 for participants under age 25, or $60 for non-members (the $60 includes a $25 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.

*Photo by Janice Miller Photography*




# Wonderful Writing: *Grass, Sky, Song*

The next book group meeting will be March 9, 2017. The discussion will be about *Grass, Sky, Song: Promise and Peril in the World of Grassland Birds* by Trevor Herriot, an award winning author who lives in Regina, Saskatchewan. One commentator describes the book: "As beautifully rendered as the land it celebrates. The writing, the illustrations [drawn by the author], and the design all rise to the level or art." Book group meetings go from 5:30-6:45 PM. If you are new to the book group and plan to attend for the first time, please contact Adele Pittendrigh so you can be added to the mailing list. adele.pittendrigh@gmail.com

# Crowing for Our 50th Anniversary

As Sacajawea Audubon begins it's 50th anniversary year, it seems fitting to crow a little about our recent accomplishments. We've had an outstanding year with 184 volunteers participating in SAS projects. Volunteer hours added up to an estimated 6300 hours, the equivalent of 157 full-time workers donating one 40-hour week each to Sacajawea Audubon. What did we accomplish? Here are some of the highlights of 2016.

- Volunteers cleared out thickets of burdock, the Velcro-like weed that catches birds and holds on to them permanently. SAS weed-eradication teams took an astonishing **2.4 tons of burdock** to the dump. We can't say for sure how many burdock plants will not grow and how many birds will not be caught and die as a result. But we can say that after four years of clearing burdock, we are successfully getting burdock under control in some target areas.
- An estimated **5500 people** attended the Bridger Raptor Festival in 2016, a record! Sacajawea Audubon organized the educational programs for adults and children at the festival and SAS volunteers guided visitors and handed out information during the two-day festival at Bridger Bowl. Children's activities included Build a Nifty Nest Box, Sketch-a-Bird, the Binocular Blitz Game, and the first-ever Festival Passport, where children could keep track of their activities and get a prize for completing them. Educational talks ranged from *Raptor Identification* to *Avian Migration* to *Forgotten Aerial Predators*. It was great to see so many people having fun and learning more about birds.
- Other projects include monitoring 70 **Kestrel** nest boxes and four **Bluebird** trails with over 180 nesting boxes and contributing to the reintroduction of **Trumpeter Swans** in the Madison River. Other important conservation and educational programs help birds survive and help more humans get involved in protecting birds. Some of those programs are monitoring three important bird areas encompassing Headwaters State Park, Madison Valley, and Harrison Reservoir, supporting the Bridger Raptor Count, organizing five Christmas Bird Counts, supporting the Ruby River Restoration Project and leading 20 field trips with over 200 participants. In addition, SAS provides birding classes, outreach to Gallatin Valley organizations, and educational materials about birds to local schools.

All-in-all SAS had a great year, thanks to the volunteers who work for birds. In 2017 we plan to keep up with our successful projects and add new ones. We will expand collaborations with local conservation groups, involve more members in SAS projects, and provide more stable funding by encouraging people to support bird conservation by becoming an official Local SAS Member.

***-Adele Pittendrigh***

***Please see the back page of this Newsletter for more information about the Local Membership***

## Reminder: Bird Photography Classes Offered in March

Sacajawea Audubon is pleased to offer two bird photography classes as part of our 50th Anniversary celebration taught by well-known local photographer Carol Polich.

### Bird Photography Level I for DSLR cameras only

This class is for those of you who want to get out of Program or Auto modes and learn how to shoot wildlife/birdlife in Aperture Priority mode. Minimum: 4 people, maximum 10 people at $115 for SAS Members and $140 for non-members.

**DATE: February 23, 24 and March 2, 4**
**TIMES: THUR (both) , FRI -5:30-8pm; SAT 10-2pm**

**DEADLINE FOR SIGNING UP WITH THIS CLASS IS: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2017**

### Bird Photography Level II for DSLR cameras only

This class is for those with DSLR cameras who shoot in Manual or Aperture Priority & understand the relationship between ISO, Shutter Speed, and F stops. Minimum: 4 people, maximum 10 people at $115 for SAS Members and $140 for non-members.

**DATE: MARCH 8, 9, 10, 11**
**TIMES: WED, THUR, FRI -5:30-8pm; SAT 10-2pm**

**DEADLINE FOR SIGNING UP WITH THIS CLASS IS: MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017**

****To sign-up, please contact Stephanie Nelson via email (preferred) at s.n.mayfly@gmail.com, or call (406) 587-3052. Payment will be required prior to the class. When you sign up you MUST have your own camera & mention your camera "Brand" and the Model such as Canon T3i plus which lenses you have. NO POINT AND SHOOT CAMERAS ARE ALLOWED.**

# MT Audubon Annual Bird Festival

**June 9th -11th, 2017 Great Falls, Montana**

## Field Trips

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! Come join us in Great Falls for **Montana Audubon's 17th Annual Bird Festival, this year co-hosted by Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon, June 9 - 11 at the Best Western Heritage Inn.**

*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 Great Falls area. Here is just a brief sampling of some of those trips to contemplate as you anticipate the upcoming Bird Festival:

**FIRST PEOPLES BUFFALO JUMP.** First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park and National Historic Landmark is an archaeological site with possibly the largest bison cliff jump in North America. Native peoples used this site for at least a thousand years before Lewis and Clark traveled through what became Montana. The bison jump site consists of a mile-long sandstone cliff; there are remnants of drive lanes on top of the cliff and up to 18 feet of compacted buffalo remains below. Expect to see Rock Wren, Say's Phoebe, Long-billed Curlew, Upland Sandpiper, Black-headed Grosbeak, warblers and flycatchers among the rock slopes, mixed grass prairie, and, as time allows, nearby riparian areas.

**SULPHUR SPRINGS.** Leaders from Audubon and the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center will highlight birds, plants, and Lewis and Clark history on this easy 3.6 mile round trip walk through yucca, grasslands and coulees. The hiking trail is along a relatively remote stretch of Missouri River to the cold springs. Water from Sulphur Springs proved vital in treating Sacagawea's illness during the 1805 portage at Great Falls. The interpretive signs along the trail offer information regarding Lewis and Clark expedition. Expect to see Lark Sparrow, Eastern and Western Kingbirds, Bullock's Oriole, American White Pelican, possibly Yellow-breasted Chat and Yellow Warblers.

**SALISBURY FARM.** Visit an 8,000 acre organic farm along the Missouri River near Floweree, 30 miles north of Great Falls. Learn about the small grain and cattle ranch run by Elsie and Russ Salisbury, while observing a variety of birds, a bald eagle nest and tipi rings. They recently finished a new home insulated with hay bales!

**THAIN CREEK TRAIL.** In the Highwood Mountains east of Great Falls, we will bird along the road through grassland and riparian habitat, then take a moderate two-mile round trip hike through conifers. Expect to see Lazuli Bunting, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Red-naped Sapsucker, Mountain Chickadee, Warbling Vireo, Red Crossbill, various warblers, kinglets and Spotted Towhee.

**GIANT SPRINGS STATE PARK**. Giant Springs was documented by the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805 and is one of the largest freshwater springs in the country. The springs are the site of the Roe River, once listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's shortest river. Large trees and Missouri River riparian habitat make this a dependable place to see birds near Great Falls. Bullock's Oriole, House Wren, swallows, kingbirds, Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Northern Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, and American White Pelican are the usual species seen, and perhaps a Great Horned Owl. Great for beginners and families.

*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.

# Results from the 2016 Christmas Bird Counts

## BOZEMAN

On Saturday December 17th, **Bozeman** conducted its Christmas Bird Count. It was cold, with a temperature range of -27$^0$ F to -5$^0$ F; the good news was that it was a sunny and calm day. 32 people took part in the count, with another 8 feeder watchers.

Amazingly after 78 CBC's in **Bozeman**, three new species were added to the cumulative species total. New to the count this year were **Northern Shoveler**, **Eared Grebe**, and **Long-eared Owl**. Other notable birds were **Lesser Scaup** seen for only the fifth time and **American Coot** seen for the seventh time. During count week **Virginia Rail** and **Pacific Wren** were seen**,** which have only been seen on count day once and twice, respectively. The big miss of the count was Brown Creeper, which could be chalked-up to everyone keeping their ears warm.

New high counts included **Ruffed Grouse**-10, **Red-tailed Hawk**-81, **Northern Pygmy Owl**-2, **Black-billed Magpie**-1184, **Common Raven**-194, and **Bohemian Waxwing**-5578.

## ENNIS

The **Ennis** Christmas Bird Count took place on December 14th. The conditions for the **Ennis** count were considerably milder then the Bozeman count, with temperatures ranging from 6$^0$ F to 25$^0$ F under mostly cloudy skies. 21 people participated on the count, plus 3 feeder watchers.

The 54 species seen on the count was somewhat lower than has been seen in recent years. Two species, **Cackling Goose** and **Hooded Merganser,** were seen for the first time on the **Ennis** count.

We had new high counts for **Canada Goose**-2050, **Great Blue Heron-5**, **Eurasian Collard-Dove**-159 and 2 **Mourning Doves** which tied a previous record. This was the fifth sighting of **Rusty Blackbird** and **Virginia Rail**. Five goldeneyes remained undifferentiated. **Mallard, Common Goldeneye, Bald Eagle, Black-billed Magpie, Black-capped Chickadee** and **House Sparrow** are the only species that have been observed on all 57 counts.

## THREE FORKS

20 people spotted 56 species and over 15,000 individual birds on the T**hree Forks** count, during a day with temperatures ranging from -8$^0$ F to 28$^0$ F.

Remarkably, new high counts were achieved for 15 species of birds on the count. Some of the notable new high counts were **Northern Harrier-22, Rough-legged Hawk-86**, and **Canyon Wren-5**. It was only the sixth time **Short-eared Owls** have been observed on the **Three Forks** count.

*Christmas Bird Count by Chan Robbins*

## 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 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
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| | Sharon Hanton | sharonhanton@sacajaweaaudubon.org |
| | Rick Sanders | ricksanders@sacajaweaaudubon.org |
| | Mike Vivion | mikevivion@sacajaweaaudubon.org |
| | Adele Pittendrigh | adelepittendrigh@sacajaweaaudubon.org |
| | Paulette Epple | bigskyepples@msn.com |

Honorary Board Member Peter Norlander norlander@q.com

**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 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/

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

**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**

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