SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

February 2018

Calendar at a Glance

February 12th	SAS Monthly Meeting
Febrauary 16-19th	Great Backyard Bird Count
February 20th	Deadline to submit to SAS Newsletter
March 1st & 3rd	Raptor ID Workshop
March 7th	SAS Book Group
March 24 & 25th	Freezeout Lake Tour

In 2018, we mark the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the most powerful and important bird-protection law ever passed. In honor of this milestone, nature lovers around the world are joining forces to celebrate the "Year of the Bird" and commit to protecting birds today and for the next hundred years.

The Remarkable Nonstop Transoceanic Flights of the Pacific Golden-Plover

with Wally Johnson

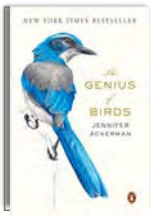
Monday February 12th, 2018 at 7pm ***(Social at 6:30 pm)***
Hope Lutheran Church 2152 W. Graf St. (*off of South 19th street*)

Sacajawea Audubon's February 12th program features a talk on the Pacific Golden-Plover, one of the world's longest distance migrant birds. They make remarkable nonstop transoceanic flights in spring and fall that cover thousands of miles. Oscar W. (Wally) Johnson, an affiliate research scientist in the Department of Ecology at Montana State University, is a plover expert having studied these birds for many years. He became fascinated with plovers in the '60s while conducting bird research at Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands, and this fascination eventually led to his long-term research on the species, ongoing since 1979. Johnson's research has involved fieldwork throughout the Pacific (the birds' wintering grounds) and in Alaska (the breeding grounds). His talk will cover various features of plover ecology with an emphasis on new technology that enables the tracking of their amazing hemispheric travel.

Wally Johnson is a graduate of Washington State University (PhD Zoology), he taught for many years in the Minnesota State University system, and moved to Bozeman in 1990. Almost all his research has focused on birds, primarily their anatomy and ecology. He has published about 60 scientific papers (more than half involve plovers) along with two monographs (Pacific Golden-Plover and American Golden-Plover) for The Birds of North America series, and a recent popular book on Pacific Golden-Plovers. Johnson's work has been funded by the National Geographic Society and numerous state and federal agencies.

Sacajawea Audubon meets every 2nd Monday of the month, September through May. Our meetings are held at Hope Lutheran Church (unless otherwise indicated), 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.

Attention All SAS Book Group Participants: Change of Meeting Time!



The SAS Book Group will be discussing The *Genius of Birds*, by Jennifer Ackermanis. An award-winning science writer tours the globe to reveal what makes birds capable of such extraordinary feats of mental prowess. Birds are astonishingly intelligent creatures. According to revolutionary new research, some birds rival primates and even humans in their remarkable forms of intelligence. In *The Genius of Birds,* acclaimed author Jennifer Ackerman explores their newly discovered brilliance and how it came about.

The Book Group will discuss *The Genius of Birds* at Hope Lutheran Church on **Wednesday, March 7, 2018,** from **4:00pm - 5:45pm**. Everyone is welcome. If you are attending for the first time please email Adele Pittendrigh. adele.pittendrigh@gmail.com.

The next upcoming books for the SAS Book Group is:
April 18, 2018: *The Bone Museum*, Wayne Grady.

Bird Notes: Christmas Bird Counts

The Bozeman CBC was conducted on Saturday, December 16. The weather was challenging, with moderate snowfall all day long, totaling up to 10 inches. The temperature was on the mild side, ranging from 28 to 34 degrees. Even with the poor visibility and poor road conditions we had a very respectable total of **62 species**. **Cackling Goose** and **Sandhill Crane** (injured wing) were new species for the count. A **Northern Shoveler** was seen for only the second time and **American Coot** was seen for the fifth time. Birds with new high count totals included Wild Turkey (44), American Kestrel (6), Rock Pigeon (1077), Eurasian Collared-Dove (**964**), Gray Jay (3), Blue Jay (10), Clark's Nutcracker (40), and Red-winged Blackbird (**800**).

The following day, the weather conditions were a marked improvement for the Livingston and West Yellowstone counts. A new high of **60 species** of birds were seen on the Livingston count, including a **Snow Goose, Spotted Towhee**, and **3 Harris's Sparrows** at one feeder. The American Wigeon (81), Cooper's Hawk (4), and Evening Grosbeak (126) were impressively high counts.

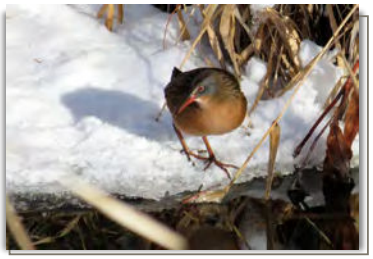
The West Yellowstone count added **American Crow** to their cumulative count this year, and had a new high count for **Lesser Scaup** (17).

The weather for the Ennis count on December 20th was snowy and windy, with the arrival of another storm. A total of **63 species** of birds were found within the count circle, including several rarely seen species: **Cackling Goose** (3 years), **Northern Shoveler** (3 years), and **White-throated Sparrow** (3 years). The 5 Great Blue Herons and 3 Virginia Rails were new high counts.

The day after Christmas was cold in Three Forks, with an early morning reading of 19 below zero, but the sunny and calm weather made the days high of 2 degrees seem warm. A total of **69 species** were seen, with **Lesser Scaup** and **Fox Sparrow** being new to the count. There were a slew of high counts on the count: American Wigeon (26), Bufflehead (2), Hooded Merganser (4), Wild Turkey (77), Golden Eagle (13), Red-tailed Hawk (43), Rough-legged Hawk (**129**), Wilson's Snipe (**13**), American Kestrel (9), White-breasted Nuthatch (2), and Common Redpoll (625).

The Ruby Valley count held on January 4 had some of the best weather I've ever experienced on one of our local counts, sunny, calm winds, and temperatures into the low thirties. The Ruby Valley count is only in its third year, so you would expect that there will be new birds to be found and this year didn't disappoint; with **Ruffed Grouse, Ferruginous Hawk, Great Grey Owl, Blue Jay,** and **Red-breasted Nuthatch** being added to the cumulative species total (sometimes a Red-breasted Nuthatch sighting is equal to a Great Gray Owl). The participants on this count tallied a total of **60 species**. The big miss...no starlings.

-John Parker


Virginia Rail (L. Harris)

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

Raptor Identification Workshop and Field Trip March 1 and 3

Presented by: Steve Hoffman, Founder of HawkWatch International and Sacajawea Audubon's Bird Sighing Specialist John Parker

Have you ever wanted to sharpen your raptor identification skills? If so, this is the workshop for you! On Thursday 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. This presentation will be especially valuable for "intermediate" and "advanced" raptor watching enthusiasts, although beginners will also find this workshop quite helpful. Participants will then go into the field on Saturday, with trip leaders Steve Hoffman and John Parker to practice their newly-developed skills.

The Thursday night presentation will start at 5:30 PM, and end by 7:30 PM in the Bozeman Public Library's large conference room.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (Photo by Hobart Collins)

Saturday morning's field trip will meet at the Museum of the Rockies at 8:15 AM, and leave no later than 8:30 AM. Be sure to dress for the weather and bring any necessary drinks or snacks for this 5-6 hour trip. If you have a spotting scope you can bring, that would be helpful.

There is a $40 fee for Sacajawea Audubon members, $15 for participants under age 25, or $65 for non-members (the $65 includes a $25 Sacajawea Audubon membership). There is a strict 20-person limit for the workshop and field trip. Advance reservation and payment is required. (Early registration is strongly advised!). For more information and to make reservations please call John Parker at 586-5863, or e-mail birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org before February 11th. After this date please e-mail Steve Hoffman at steve@merlinbirding.com or call him at 461-5714.

Attention Citizen Scientists and Short Eared Owl Enthusiasts

Your help is needed! The Owl Research Institute is embarking on a 3-year collaborative study to monitor Short-eared Owl populations in the western U.S. and will rely on volunteers to make it a success. Project WAfLS (Western Asio flammeus Landscape Study), involves 15 other agencies and organizations across 8 states and is designed to assess the population status, trends, and threats against the Short-eared Owl – an enigmatic, open-country species. This project, funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is a rare example of cooperation and collaboration on a large scale and is an opportunity to influence and focus conservation and restoration activities for this species. This species-specific monitoring program will provide the most robust population data for Short-eared Owls to date. The effort aims to complete a number of coordinated surveys across California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

The survey design is well-suited to volunteer participation and will rely primarily on volunteer, citizen-scientists to collect data. Volunteers will be asked to select one of 50 grids in the state and will be responsible for two 1.5 hour visits, each occurring in a separate 3 week window (March/April and April/May). The timing for a given route is dependent upon elevation. It is a road based survey (8 - 11 points along a secondary road, separated by 1/2 mile) that starts 100 minutes before darkness, and finishes 10 minutes after darkness. The survey timing is set to coincide with the Short-eared Owls elaborate courtship displays. Check out this video from partner Neil Paprocki (Hawkwatch International) in Utah: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-YKEmTvEQE.

More information, maps, and sign-up will be coming shortly. In the meantime, if you're interested in learning more about this ambitious project or want to know how to participate, please contact Matt Larson, Research Director at the Owl Research Institute, at (701) 866-5771 or owlinstitute@outlook.com.

Sacajawea Audubon 2017 Bluebird Trail Summary

It was a very successful nesting season in 2017. A total of 684 bluebirds fledged from boxes on our 6 monitored trails. 178 boxes were used (by bluebirds) out of 272 available. The remainder were used by tree swallows and house wrens.

On the Pass Creek Rd./Rocky Mountain Rd. trails, we banded a total of 397 birds, 357 nestlings and 40 adult females. We also recaptured 15 females. This year we also banded 100 nestlings with colored leg bands. This will help us quickly ID birds we have banded as to year.

On Janne's first check of the Dry Creek/Pass Creek boxes on April 19th, she was surprised to find one box with a female bluebird on 5 warm eggs! Now that is getting an early start.

Predation of nests was down from last year. The Rocky Mountain Rd. trail had a total of 18 predated nests (down from 24 last year). The Pass Creek trail had 24 nests predated (down from 34 last year). The causes were again varied: snakes, raccoons, weasels & kestrels.

We took a total of 18 people out on the bluebird trails this summer, including 7 on the June 18th field trip. The highlight of the trip was seeing the excitement of 11 year old Ondrej Ball looking into the bluebird box that he sponsors and seeing a bluebird nest with two cold eggs. That box successfully fledged 10 bluebirds from two clutches.

Following is a complete report of the success (or failure) of each box, along with its sponsor. ***Lou Ann Harris***

Box #	Sponsor Name	Box Result
1	Christine Gore-Masi (Paul Gore)	2 bluebird nests: 1st fledged 2, 2nd fledged 4
2	Christine Gore-Masi (Paul Gore)	2 bluebird nests: 1st fledged 6, 2nd fledged 3
3	Helen Tolliver (Judy Tolliver)	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd tree swallow
5	Erna Smeets	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd tree swallow
6	Janne Hayward (Star Reierson)	2 nests: 1st bb nest predated, 2nd bb failed
7	Julie Catanese	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd failed tree swallow
8	Tonia Joy Jane (Roxanna McLaughlin)	2 nests: 1st bb fledged 6, 2nd bb failed
9	Rick Sanders	Bluebird nest predated, mice took over after
10	Paul Gore, Jr. (Paul Gore)	2 nests: 1st fledged 4 bb, 2nd tree swallow
12	Joe & Blanche Warnisher (BJ Plum)	2 nests: 1st predated bluebird, 2nd house wren
13	Julie Catanese	2 nests: 1st predated bluebird, 2nd tree swallow
14	Janne Hayward (Star Rierson)	2 nests: 1st tree swallow, 2nd tree swallow
15	Peggy Osbourn & David Cole	2 nests: 1st bb nest predated, 2nd tree swallow
16	Leo Freeman	1 nest: predated bb
17	Betty Jo Myers (Dana Sauwerwein)	2 nests: both house wren
18	Audrey & Joel Evers	2 nests: 1st predated bluebird, 2nd house wren
19	Anna Holstrom	2 nests: 1st predated bluebird, 2nd house wren
21	Stephanie Nelson, Mary Lee Reese	2 nests: 1st bb nest predated, 2nd bb fledged 3
22	Pat Rossow (Kristi Anderson)	2 nests: 1st failed bb, 2nd failed house wren
25	Scott Radford	2 bluebird nests: 1st predated, 2nd failed
26	Parents of Sandy McManus	1 nest: predated bb, mouse nest after that
27	Oliver Powell (Peg Osbourn/David Cole)	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd fledged 2 bb
28	Nancy Kettle (Ronna Leon)	2 nests: 1st fledged 4 bb, 2nd fledged 5 bb
31	Kay Milligan (Patty Fraser)	2 bluebird nests: 1st fledged 5, 2nd failed
32	Ronna Leon	2 bluebird nests: 1st failed, 2nd fledged 6
33	Becky Foster	1 bluebird nest: predated (snake)
34	John Edwards, Sheila Skinner	2 nests: 1st bb fledged 6, 2nd tree swallow
35	Audrey & Joel Evers	2 nests: Fledged total of 8 bb
36	Michael Bernard Kelly (Kathryn Kelly)	Box replaced: 1 tree swallow nest
37	William Hanson (Mel McCarver)	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd tree swallow
38	Margaret Perryman	1 bluebird nest: fledged 5
39	Emily Robinson (Suzan Strobel)	1 nest: tree swallow
40	Janne Hayward (Star Reierson)	1 nest: predated bb
41	Michael Bernard Kelly (Kathryn Kelly)	2 nests: 1st fledged 4, 2nd fledged 4
42	Carol Anderson & Bob Swinth	1 nest: fledged 6
43	Evie Barnes (Glenda Barnes)	1 nest: failed bb
44	Gina Carolan	1 nest: fledged 5 bb
45	Margaret Perryman	1 tree swallow nest
46	Anne Ready	empty
47	Erna Smeets	2 nests: 1st fledged 6 bb, 2nd failed bb
47A	Ned Bixler	1 nest: failed tree swallow
47B	Scott Radford	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd fledged 6 bb
47C	Bob Schleicher	1 nest: failed bb
47D	Leo Freeman	2 nests: 1st fledged 6 bb, 2nd failed bb
47E	Gina Carolan	2 nests: 1st fledged 6 bb, 2nd fledged 4 bb
47F	Pam Poulsen	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd fledged 3 bb
47G	Gus & Claire Raaum (Lou Ann Harris)	2 nests: 1st failed bb, 2nd fledged 3 bb
48	Julie Catanese	1 nest: fledged 6 bb
49	Parents of Sandy McManus	2 nests: 1st fledged 6 bb, 2nd fledged 4 bb
50	Eva Patten (Glenda Barnes)	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd fledged 5 bb
51	John Edwards, Sheila Skinner	2 nests: 1st fledged 6 bb, 2nd tree swallow
52	Mr & Mrs Ralph Goldman	1 nest: fledged 6 bb

Box #	Sponsor Name	Box Result
57	Ann Gore (Paul Gore)	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd predated swallow
58	Ann Gore (Paul Gore)	1 nest: 1st fledged 3 bb
59	Vernon T. Myers (Dana Sauerwein)	2 nests: fledged a total of 10 bb
60	Marilyn Klocksiem, Missy Parker	2 nests: 1st fledged 6 bb, 2nd predated bb
61	Mr & Mrs Ralph Goldman	2 nests: fledged a total of 10 bb
62	Colleen Gore, Timothy Gore (Paul Gore)	2 nests: fledged a total of 10 bb
62A	Sharon Hanton	2 nests: 1st fledged 5 bb, 2nd predated bb
63	Margaret Perryman	1 nest: fledged 6 bb
64	Mary Ann Byerly	2 nests: fledged total of 11 bb
65A	Mr & Mrs Ralph Goldman	2 nests: 1st fledged 4 bb, 2nd failed bb
65B	Debi Naccarto	2 nests: fledged total of 5 bb
65C	Gus & Claire Raaum (Lou Ann Harris)	1 nest: successful tree swallow, fledged 2
66	Sally Kratochoil (Peg Osbourn/David Cole)	2 nests: fledged total of 10 bb
67	Phyllis & Fred Woods (Rox McLaughlin)	1 nest: fledged 6 bb
69	Christine Gore-Masi (Paul Gore)	2 nests: 1st failed bb, 2nd fledged 3
70	Mary Geis (Eva Patten)	2 nests: both failed bb, eggs abandoned
71	Sophie Freeman (Leo Freeman)	2 nests: 1st failed bb, 2nd failed swallow
72	Paul Gore, Jr. (Paul Gore)	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd fledged 5 bb
73	Paul Gore, Jr. (Paul Gore)	2 nests: fledged total of 10 bb
74	Ethan Hanson (Mel McCarver)	2 nests: fledged total of 8 bb
75	Timothy Gore (Paul Gore)	2 nests: 1st fledged 6 bb, 2nd tree swallow
76	Bob Schleicher	1 nest: fledged 6 bb
77	Becky Foster	2 nests: 1st fledged 5 bb, 2nd failed bb
78	Gina Carolan	2 nests: 1st fledged 6 bb, 2nd failed bb
79	Virginia Jakobe	1 nest: fledged 5 bb
82	Suzan Strobel	2 nests: 1st failed bb, 2nd fledged 4 bb
83	Ann Gore (Paul Gore)	2 nests: both failed bb
84	Erna Smeets	1 nest: predated bb
85	Scott Radford	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd failed bb
86	Jim Bennett (Marilyn Klocksiem)	1 nest: predated bb
87	Sandy Pittendrigh	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd failed bb
87A	Harry & Terry Milvid (Mary Lou Wild)	1 nest: predated bb
88	Adele Pittendrigh	1 nest: predated bb
89	Joe & Blanche Warnisher (BJ Plum)	2 nests: 1st failed bb, 2nd fledged 5 bb
90	Kay Milligan (Patty Fraser)	1 nest: fledged 5 bb
90A	Harry & Terry Milvid (Mary Lou Wild)	1 nest: fledged 4 bb
91	Kay Milligan (Patty Fraser)	2 nests: 1st fledged 4, 2nd failed bb
92	Stephanie Nelson, Mary Lee Reese	2 nests: 1st fledged 4, 2nd failed swallow
93	Audrey & Joel Evers	1 nest: fledged 5 bb
94A	John Edwards, Sheila Skinner	2 nests: 1st predated bluebird, 2nd house wren
94B	Stephanie Nelson, Mary Lee Reese	2 nests: 1st failed tree swallow, 2nd house wren
95	Colleen Gore (Paul Gore)	1 nest: failed bb
96	Debby Wheat	1 nest: failed tree swallow
97	Rita & Hannah Nixon	1 nest: predated bb
98	Timothy Gore (Paul Gore)	1 nest: fledged 4 bb
99	Lynn Mugaas	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd fledged 1 bb
99A	Lynn Mugaas	2 nests: 1st failed bb, 2nd failed house wren
100	Ondrej Ball	2 nests: fledged total of 10 bb
106	John Parker	2 nests: 1st fledged 6 bb, 2nd tree swallow
107	Beth Kaeding	2 nests: 1st predated bb, 2nd tree swallow
109	Colleen Gore (Paul Gore)	2 nests: fledged total of 6 bb

Sacajawea Audubon Society 2018 Montana Birding Tours

Freezeout Lake Wildlife Management Area March 24 -25, 2018 *(2-day, 1-night)*

Freezeout Lake is Montana's primary snow goose staging area, a place where as many as 300,000 snow geese and 10,000 tundra swans gather and rest before flying onward. In Spring, the snow geese head for Alberta and central Saskatchewan in Canada. There they mass with hundreds of thousands of other snow geese from Texas and other Gulf Coast States. In a series of shorter flights, the geese then make their way to nesting grounds on the wind swept, extreme northwest Arctic coast of Canada.

SW Montana Sage-Grouse "Lek" Tour May 4-6, 2018 *(3-day, 2-night)*

Southwest Montana bird watching tour of sagebrush-steppe, grassland and wetland habitats is great fun for birders of all skill levels. This 3-day, 2-night guided trip will take you to the Grasshopper Valley to witness displaying males at one of the largest sage-grouse breeding leks in Beaverhead County (near Bannack). Also, look forward to birding grazing lands north of Dillon, for views of Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, Burrowing Owls, Prairie Falcons, Ferruginous Hawks, Long-billed Curlew, McCown's Longspur, Horned Lark, Say's Phoebe, and other grassland birds. The trip will take you through the Pioneer Mountains along Birch Creek in search of various forest raptors, woodpeckers, grouse, and numerous passerines. The wetlands and shorelines of Clark Canyon Reservoir are also on the itinerary where we will search for various waterfowl, loons, grebes, pelicans and other water-birds. In addition to the birding we will explore the Bannack ghost town, which was a booming mining town beginning in the 1860's

Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge May 25-28 *(4-day, 3-nights)*

Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge is located in the scenic and isolated Centennial Valley of southwestern Montana, approximately 40 miles west of Yellowstone National Park. This 4-day, 3-nights guide trip takes you into a vast array of habitat, ranging from high elevation wetland and prairie at 6,600 feet, to the harsh alpine habitat of the Centennial Mountains at 9,400 feet above sea level. It is this diverse, marsh-prairie-sagebrush-montane environment that gives Red Rock Lakes its unique character. Birds are special residents at Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge rich wetlands and nearby forests makes ideal habitat for breeding and feeding birds in early June. Red Rock Lakes is best known for being the primary location for the efforts saving the trumpeter swan from extinction. In addition to the beautiful trumpeter swan, there are a minimum of 232 other species of birds that have been recorded within the refuge. Some of the many species we hope to see are: Long-billed Curlews, Sandhill Cranes, Sage Thrashers, Brewer's & Vesper Sparrows, White-faced Ibis, American Avocets, Willets, Dowitchers, Ferruginous Hawks, Northern Harriers, Prairie Falcons, Golden Eagles, Swainson's Hawks, Short-eared Owls, and various ducks, flycatchers, kinglets, warblers, vireos, tanagers, thrushes, woodpeckers and, if we're lucky, Sage Grouses.

All birding tours are guided by Wildlife Biologist and Endangered Species Specialist, Steve Hoffman (past director of Montana Audubon and Hawkwatch International). Tours include travel from Bozeman, lodging and most meals. For a full description of the birding tour and cost, contact Steve Hoffman swhoffman0322@gmail.com.

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Sacajawea Audubon News is sent to all Sacajawea Audubon Society members monthly October through May. Deadline is the 20th 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**.

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Find more at the **Sacajawea Audubon Society Website** at: **http://www.sacajaweaaudubon.org/**

Sacajawea Audubon Society

Membership

____Basic Membership————$25

____Supporting Membership-——$50

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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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