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

January 8th	**SAS Monthly Meeting**
January 9th	**Bird Sightings to John Parker**
January 17th	**SAS Book Group Meeting**
	Science Inquiry Lecture
January 20th	**Deadline to submit to SAS Newsletter**

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

A Lost History of Arctic Grayling Found by Digitalization

Monday January 8th, 2018 at 7pm
Hope Lutheran Church
2152 W. Graf St. (off of South 19th street)

Join Sacajawea Audubon on January 8th, 2018 at Hope Lutheran Church in Bozeman for a special evening with Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Manager Bill West. The program, "A Lost History of Arctic Grayling Found by Digitization", is a fascinating story set in a remote Montana valley, once filled by homesteads. It is now mostly public land or large ranches.

Arctic grayling are a beautiful fish once abundant in the upper Missouri River in Southwest Montana. Today grayling are relatively rare in Montana and many think of the Big Hole River when discussing recovery. However, the grayling of the Centennial Valley have a fascinating history that has been rediscovered in recent years. This is the southernmost population of grayling in North America. They are normally found in the Arctic. The Bozeman Fish Hatchery was established in 1892 and one of its early missions was to help "save" the fast declining "Montana grayling". The hatchery was run by the U.S. Fish Commission, a branch of the Department of Commerce. There was no US Forest Service then, no BLM, no National Park Service and no U.S Fish and Wildlife Service or National Wildlife Refuge System. The "Commission" came to the Centennial Valley in 1898 and harvested over 33 million eggs in eleven years in an attempt to save the fish. Grayling are still struggling, but we now have clues to how and why they declined and never recovered given significant efforts over the past 120 years.

Bill West is a wildlife professional employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the past 35 years to manage National Wildlife Refuges. Thirty years are on refuges in Montana. He is a MS graduate of the University of Missouri. His knowledge is land management for furred and feathered creatures such as Trumpeter swan and bison. Red Rock Lakes NWR introduced him to an amazing fish with a tough history, caused by human alterations to the landscape. Biologists/managers may be close to untangling issues that caused the decline. The Red Rock Lakes NWR home page is: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/red_rock_lakes/

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!

In the future the SAS Book Group will meet **from 4:00--5:45pm** at the Hope Lutheran Church.

As a reminder, the SAS Book Group will be discussing *Winter World* by Bernd Heinrich this January. *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 **4:00pm - 5:45pm**. Everyone is welcome. If you are attending for the first time please email Adele Pittendrigh. adele.pittendrigh@gmail.com.

The upcoming books for the SAS Book Group are:
March 7, 2018: *The Genius of Birds*, Jennifer Ackerman
April 18, 2018: *The Bone Museum*, Wayne Grady.

Bird Notes: Central Park Pond

This 16 acre pond is approximately midway between Belgrade and Manhattan, and because of its central location it can be reached within a half hour from nearly anywhere in the greater Gallatin Valley. The pond was originally excavated around 1960 by the Department of Transportation, for material used in the construction of either Highway 10 or Interstate 90. As Central Park was the closest town, locals started calling it Central Park Pond. Central Park was one of the first settlements in the Gallatin Valley area. The town site on the Gallatin River was the location of the first bridge across the river, and later a stop on the Northern Pacific Railroad. Just a collection of a few houses now, Central Park was a major hub of commerce in the late 1800's. Originally the town of Central Park was three miles up the river from its present location. When the town was relocated to its present site, its name was changed to "Fly's Bridges", then briefly renamed "Creamery" (who remembers the cheese factory) and finally back to Central Park when the railroad arrived.

Almost immediately, birders took note of the birds that were attracted to the new pond. In P.D. Skaar's 1969 Birds of the Bozeman Latilong he notes that the pond was one of the more accessible "hotspots" for waterfowl and shorebirds during migration. There are several reasons that Central Park Pond is such an appealing spot for birds and bird watching. First of all, since the pond's creation it has been designated by Fish Wildlife and Parks as a waterfowl protection enclosure, so even during the waterfowl hunting season it's possible to view the birds without flushing them. Because the pond is spring fed, it is one of the few locations in this area that has open water through most of the winter. Until the temperatures reach the double digits below zero, there is always at least a small hole in the ice for the hardiest ducks to linger on. Even though the pond is on private property, the view from the county road allows for terrific views of the birds on the pond.

White-winged Scoter

During peak migration periods the pond can be covered with literally thousands of ducks. While the swans and geese are easy enough to pick out, sometimes it is hard to tell the ducks for the Mallards. With careful study it's not uncommon to be able to identify over ten species of ducks, and occasionally you might discover something more unusual. Some of the uncommon waterfowl that are seen at the pond include: Cackling Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, Eurasian Wigeon, and Greater Scaup. Occasionally, Killdeer spend the winter at the pond, and in 2000 a Dunlin spent the winter at the pond, which is the only case of this shorebird over wintering in Montana.

A sunny winter afternoon might be my favorite time to visit Central Park Pond. With the sun at your back, the ducks in their breeding plumage are absolutely dazzling. The irradiance on a Ring-necked Ducks head or a displaying Barrow's Goldeneye are a sure cure for the mid-winter doldrums.

Thanks to the late November warm spell melting the ice off of Glen Lake at the East Gallatin Recreation Area, I was fortunate to find 3 male **White-winged Scoters** on the pond November 27th. Just to the west at Cherry River, Chris Nixon discovered a late **Spotted Towhee** on November 23rd. That same day Ray and Linda Forrest had a lingering **White-throated Sparrow** in their Paradise Valley yard.

-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

Science Inquiry Series: Insights from the Montana Climate Assessment

Museum of the Rockies
Wednesdays at 7 pm
Sponsored by the Gallatin Valley Friends of the Sciences
Free to the public

Explore cutting edge science topics, their latest developments, and their relevance to Society--through speaker presentations followed by conversations between speaker and audience.

January 17th - How has Montana's climate changed, what are the impacts, and how do we plan for change in the future? **Dr. Cathy Whitlock**. MSU professor of Earth Sciences and lead author of the 2017 Montana Climate Assessment, will offer key insights on the two-year science-based effort and what it means for Montanans coping with climate change.

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.

JOIN THE FLOCK

SAS Launches a 50th Anniversary Local Membership Drive

Sacajawea Audubon (SAS) encourages everyone who enjoys our field trips and monthly programs or supports our conservation work to join the local chapter. Even if you belong to the National Audubon Society, we need your support through a Local SAS Membership. 100% of your Local Membership dues will directly support SAS educational and conservation programs. We hope that you will join now, as we approach the 50th Anniversary of our chapter's existence.

In addition, SAS is asking our membership for an additional commitment to support the annual Bridger raptor count. For the past 27 years one of the most important localities to monitor migrating Golden Eagles in the western United States has been the Bridger Mountains, northeast of Bozeman, Montana. Initiated by HawkWatch International in 1991, and led by Montana Audubon starting in 2009, the Bridger monitoring site is located at the top of the ridge adjacent to the Bridger Bowl Ski area. The most significant outcome of this long-term study is the statistically-significant (~40%) decline in counts of migrating Golden Eagles along this flyway since the late 1990s. This finding has led the US Fish & Wildlife Service and others to further investigate the year-round ecological requirements and population health of this iconic raptor (Davis and Hoffman, 2015).

The Fall 2017 raptor count in the Bridger mountains was funded and managed by Sacajawea Audubon and we are committed to continuing this management role for the foreseeable future. The elevation at the monitoring site is approximately 9,000 feet and is reached after a 2-mile hike that gains about 2,000 feet of elevation from the Bridger Bowl parking area. Two raptor identification experts count passing raptors from 17 species every day, weather permitting, from late August to early November.

Continuation of this monitoring program is critical to provide the data needed to assess population trends in Golden Eagles and other raptors. This monitoring program is the largest and most expensive conservation program that is funded by Sacajawea Audubon. To help pay for the continuation of this program we are requesting that our members join Sacajawea Audubon for an annual fee of $25.00. The raptor monitoring program data is used to prepare an annual report covering raptor population trends.

To help cover the costs of the Bridger raptor count and Sacajawea Audubon's other education and conservation programs we would like our members to provide a donation above the $25.00 annual membership fee and become sustaining members as shown on the membership form.

Sacajawea Audubon is an all-volunteer organization and local membership gives you many benefits.

SAS Members Are:

- **Protecting** working lands for birds and other wildlife across Southwestern Montana.
- **Preserving** and protecting bird species and their habitats.
- **Supporting** bird-friendly communities in Montana.
- **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 environmental issues locally, regionally, and globally.

SAS Members Enjoy:

- **Free** Monthly Keynote Speaker Meetings.
- **Free** *Birding Hotspots of Gallatin Valley"*, a guide to birding around the Gallatin Valley & Beyond
- **Free** monthly member newsletter and e-newsletter, so you'll always know what's going on.
- **Member-only discounts** on educational courses, programs and special events.
- **Savings** on purchases and access to member-only sales.
- **Opportunities** to meet new people and become part of a friendly group that shares an interest in birds, wildlife, the environment, and conservation.
- **Free** guided birding field trips.

The "SAS Local Membership Form" is attached to the end of the newsletter

Thank you for becoming part of a local grass-roots group that is effective in promoting conservation of birds, wildlife and their habitat in southwestern Montana.

Sincerely,
Loreene Reid
President, Sacajawea Audubon Society

Montana Audubon Remembers Sam Sperry

Sam Sperry receives recognition from Janice Miller, 1991. Photo by Naomi Smith.

Montana Audubon recently learned of the passing of Sam Sperry. Sam was first and foremost involved with the Helena Audubon Chapter, Last Chance Audubon (LCAS). He joined LCAS in February 1974 and became involved in a hurry. He was elected secretary in May of that year, then president in 1975 and again in 1979. He worked hard to help the nascent chapter develop, strengthening its bylaws and creating a formal budget process.

Sam also played an important role with Montana Audubon: our organization held its first meeting at Sam's home in Helena in September 1976—and Sam was elected our first president. Montana Audubon was formed to "further the Audubon cause in Montana," and "to speak with a single message and to develop a legislative presence." When Montana Audubon was formed, there were only three chapters present at the meeting: Helena, Bozeman, and Yellowstone Valley (Billings); the Missoula and Flathead chapters were not at the first meeting.

In a May 1976 article, Sam described himself as a "militant and emotional environmentalist." He wrote: "There is no doubt in my mind that I am the least likely person in town to have been president of an Audubon chapter… I am not a birder, but I am a devoted member of the Audubon Society. This year has convinced me that the goals, objectives and methods of the National Audubon Society offer some hope for future generations of life." He spoke of his vision for LCAS: "I have not tried to make Audubon entertaining. I contend that unless the LCAS devotes a major share of its effort to conservation, land use planning, habitat protection and other non-entertaining activities, our society as we know it is going to wither and die."

In another article he wrote: "This beleaguered earth cannot stand much more of our objectivity. If, in order to permit all species on this planet to live, we humans must accept a different (and perhaps lower) standard of living, then so be it! If we cannot live as we are trying to do and still allow other living things to exist, then we have a moral obligation to abandon our present path." Militant and emotional, to be sure. Thank you, Sam. After leaving the board, the Sperry family continued to be part of the LCAS family. Sam and his wife, Joyce Beckes, created the chapter's monthly newsletter from 1985 to 1998, and then Joyce continued serving as editor until 2013. That's a lot of newsletters! Sam and Joyce recently moved to New Mexico, and Sam passed away on July 16 in Albuquerque.

NOTE: Sue Jackson wrote this article, which originally appeared in the Last Chance Audubon newsletter in December 2017. Janet Ellis added some specifics about Sam's role with Montana Audubon.

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
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Honorary Board Member Peter Norlander norlander@q.com

Sacajawea Audubon Society
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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 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**.

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

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