SacajaweaAudubonNews

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

March 2018

Calendar at a Glance

March 7th	SAS Bookclub
March 12th	SAS Monthly Meetingth
March 17th	Central Park Pond Field trip
March 21st	Science Inquiry Series
April 8th	Curlew Season with MT Audubon
April 26th-June 23rd	SAS Birding Workshops
June 8th - 10th	MT Bird Festival

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

Rehabilitating Raptors by the MT Raptor Conservation Center

Monday March 12th, 2018 at 7pm
Hope Lutheran Church
2152 W. Graf St. (off of South 19th street)

For our March 12th program, Becky Kean, MRCC Director, will present a fascinating talk on rehabilitating injured raptors. Each year the Montana Raptor Conservation Center (MRCC) receives over 200 injured raptors throughout the state of Montana in hopes of a healthy return to the wild. Injuries that they often see are human related such as hit by vehicles, window collisions or toxicities. MRCC currently has 11 ambassador raptors that can't be released back into the wild due to their injuries. These birds are trained and used in programs to educate the public of their importance in our environment as a indicator species.

MRCC was founded in 1988 in response to the rapid development of southwest Montana and the negative conflicts between humans and birds of prey. Originally named Big Sky Wildcare, the name was changed to Montana Raptor Conservation Center in 2001 to totally focus on injured birds of prey. Their mission is to improve the welfare of raptors across Montana through rehabilitation of injured birds, community education, and partnerships for raptor conservation and research.

Becky Kean moved to Bozeman in 1998 from her home town in Minot, ND. In 2003, she realized her passion for raptors when she began volunteering at the Montana Raptor Conservation Center. Becky earned a bachelor's degree in Fish and Wildlife Management from Montana State University. In 2007, Becky was hired at MRCC as Assistant Director, and a year later she was promoted to Director. She has served as MRCC Director for the past 8 years, with her focus geared towards rehabilitation.

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.

Central Park Pond Waterfowl

March 17, 2018 Leader: Mike Vivion
mikevivion@sacajaweaaudubon.org 406-210-8071

Join us on this short field trip 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 the trip, 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.**

2018 SACAJAWEA AUDUBON BIRDING WORKSHOPS

Birds inspire curiosity and a sense of wonder. Ever wonder who exactly is whistling "Hey Sweetie!" outside your window in the wee hours of the morning? Or how to identify a bird based on a flash of yellow feathers? Or what the little brown bird in the woodpile is called? Or why she's there in the first place? To help you answer all of these questions and more, Sacajawea Audubon Society is offering a BEGINNING BIRDING WORKSHOP and INTERMEDIATE BIRDING SHORT COURSES. All courses will be taught by Ashley Martens, an experienced birder, naturalist, and outdoor educator, True Nature Education. Ashley's approach to teaching birding engages all of your senses to tune in to what you see, hear, and love about the wild birds around us. Contact Ashley at ashmartens@yahoo.com or 208-883-4998 for more information and to register for all classes detailed below.

BEGINNING BIRDING: FOREST AND FIELD WORKSHOP

Participants will be introduced to the basics of birding through 3 evening classroom sessions and 3 field trips to a variety of habitats in the valley. We will cover bird families, common birds in our region, and what to look and listen for when seeking out the identity of a bird. There will be 2 sections of this course this year. Section A will have field trips on Saturday mornings. Section B will have field trips on Sunday mornings. Sections A and B will meet together classroom sessions.

Classroom Sessions

Sections A, B, C: Thurs evenings April 26, May 17, & June 7
6:30-8pm Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trips

Section A: Saturday mornings April 28, May 19, & June 9
7-10am Various Locations
Section B: Sunday mornings April 29, May 20, & June 10
7-10am Various Locations
Section C: Friday mornings April 27, May 18, & June 8
7-10am Various Locations

Cost: $95 for Sacajawea Audubon members; $115 for non-members.

Please make checks payable to "Sacajawea Audubon Society" and mail to Ashley Martens at 42 Hitching Post Rd., Bozeman, MT 59715.

Maximum 8 students per section. Supply lists will be provided upon registration.

INTERMEDIATE BIRDING SHORT COURSES

These are the perfect classes for birders who want to boost their birding skills up a notch and start studying more details of plumage, bird behaviors, and more sight and sound identification tips for specific bird families or groups. Choose as many courses as you like!

CAVITY NESTERS

Together we'll explore the ecology of birds in our region who either excavate their own cavities (like woodpeckers and nuthatches) or nest in existing cavities (like bluebirds, chickadees, and some owls). We'll also hone in on how to identify woodpeckers by calls, drums, and more. This trip happens early because most of these species breed early (and there are not so many leaves out so we can spot them easily)!

Classroom Session: Thurs, April 19th 6:30-8pm; Field Trip: Sat, April 21nd 7-10am

BIRD LANGUAGE

Birds are the true messengers of the forests. They can tell us if there's a fox hiding in the brush, a person about to run down the trail, or a sharp-shinned hawk or owl about to fly through. Come learn the ancient art of bird language. We'll learn the 5 voices of the bird and some alarm patterns in class. We'll practice identifying these voices and patterns in the field and conduct a "bird sit" together. Awareness of bird language also inevitably leads to a deeper awareness of self.

Classroom Session: Thurs, May 10th 6:30-8pm; Field Trip: Sun, May 13th 7-10am

SPARROWS & ALLIES

Those little brown birds can be difficult to tease apart. We'll hone in on plumage, habitat, and songs and calls clues for the sparrows of our region so that we can begin to appreciate their subtle beauty and differences.

Classroom Session: Thurs, May 31st 6:30-8pm; Field Trip: Sat, June 2rd 7-10am

WARBLERS

What is better than yellow feathers?! Well, maybe orange ones! We'll learn to identify differences between these wonderfully little flashy, fidgety birds and sort them out with plumage, song/call, and habitat clues.

Classroom Session: Thurs, June 14th 6:30-8pm; Field Trip: Sat, June 16th 7-10am

THRUSHES & OTHER SONGSTERS: BIRDING BY EAR

The songs of the thrushes are some of the most magical sounds of summer. We'll learn to identify these birds by sight and song, as well as the many other lovely songsters in our region. This class will focus more on birding by ear than by sight, but of course we will take some time to explore and enjoy visual identification as well. Other bird families we will be sure to include are: vireos, flycatchers, grosbeaks, and the western tanager.

Classroom Session: Thurs, June 21nd 6:30-8pm; Field Trip: Sat, June 23th 7-10am

Cost per short course: $45 for Sacajawea Audubon members; $55 for non-members. Please make checks payable to "Sacajawea Audubon Society" and mail to Ashley Martens at 42 Hitching Post Rd., Bozeman, MT 59715.

Maximum 8 students. Supply lists will be provided upon registration.

Bird Notes: Central Park Pond

Green-tailed Towhee

On the morning of January 9th, Owen Carroll spotted an odd bird at his feeder in Gardiner. After looking at the bird again he realized that it was a **Green-tailed Towhee**, which is an exceptional winter bird in Montana. There are only five other winter records for Green-tailed Towhee in Montana, two of which over-wintered. This towhee was continuing to come to the feeder in Gardiner well into February, making it the third over-wintering record for Montana. This winter two Green-tailed Towhees, seen in Colorado, are the only other ones reported north of a line running through mid New Mexico and Arizona.

Great Grey Owl

It was quite a thrill for Joan Ryshavy when she spotted a **Great Gray Owl** while skiing near the Gallatin River west of Belgrade on January.26th. Joan was able to relocate the owl again a few days later, and this time she brought a good pair of binoculars along so she could enjoy a long close look. While Great Gray Owls are primarily a bird of the mountain forests, they do occasionally venture down to the valley floors during harsh winters when the deep snow in the mountains prevents them from hunting successfully.

It's not unusual to have minor irruptions of **Blue Jays** into western Montana every few years. This fall there seemed to be an exceptional number of Blue Jays in our area, so after an eBird search for Blue Jays in western Montana I came up with some numbers that seem to be huge compared to the typical winter numbers in Montana. My overall "guesstimate" is a likely minimum of at least 80 Blue Jays reported in Western Montana. In the general area between Eureka, Kalispell, Big Fork, and Polson at least 30 birds were reported. Blue Jays do breed in small numbers in far northwestern Montana, and this is where they first started to be reported as early as the second week of August. In the Blackfoot Valley from Corvallis to Missoula there were maybe up to 15 birds reported, with the first report coming on October 9. In rough triangle from Anaconda, Helena, to Gardiner there were at least 35 birds, with the first reports coming in almost universally around October 9-10. I found it interesting how they just seem to appear across such a broad swath of the country in just a few day's time. How big was the invasion? On Bozeman's 79th Christmas Bird Count there were 10 Blue Jays (I know we missed at least 2). The previous high number for the count was 3 birds.

Blue Jay

-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

Save the Date!
June 8 - 10, 2018
Red Lion Hotel, Kalispell

Montana Audubon's 19th annual Wings Across the Big Sky bird festival is coming to Kalispell in June 2018! Our longstanding community event draws birders and wildlife enthusiasts from around the state and beyond, to celebrate Montana's birds and the landscapes they inhabit. The festival is co-sponsored by the ***Flathead Audubon Society***.

Visit our website for festival updates: **mtaudubon.org**

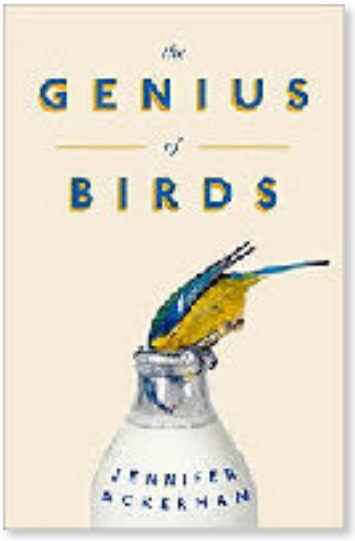
- ***Field trips to Glacier and other breathtaking areas in the Flathead region***
- ***Silent Auction: bid on a private tour to an amazing Montana destination!***
- ***Birding & conservation Presentations***
- ***Evening Banquet, Dessert Auction and More!***

Science Inquiry Series

Museum of the Rockies
Tuesdays or 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.

Mar 21 – **What's Killing the Bees? A look at the Research.**
Honey bees are the primary insect pollinators of U.S. crops valued at $17 billion annually, but for the past 10 years, honey bees have suffered losses of more than 30% per year. Join **Dr. Michelle Flenniken**, MSU microbiologist and co-director of MSU's Pollinator Health Center, for a discussion of factors affecting honey bee colony health, and the importance of both basic and applied science in addressing this global challenge.



SAS Bookclub: The Genius of Birds

In March the SAS book group will discuss The *Genius of Birds* by Jennifer Ackerman. The *Wall Street Journal* describes the book as "a masterly survey of research. . . that has produced a revolution in our understanding of bird cognition." Rick Bass says it is "delightful, revolutionary" and "a book that demands a moral consideration of the world." The group will meet March 7th, 2018, at Hope Lutheran Church from 4:00-5:15 p.m.

Curlew volunteers needed starting April 8th!

Are you ready to hear the 'currlleeee' of the Long-billed Curlew? Well, grab your binoculars and get ready, because it's almost curlew season! These charismatic shorebirds will be trickling back into the state in less than two months and we need your help finding as many as possible in and around the Helena Valley!

Last year volunteers have recorded 149 curlew and 89 Sandhill Crane sightings locally.

We have known that Montana and the Helena Valley harbor the very important grassland and wetland habitat that curlews rely on during breeding and migration. Now you have the opportunity to help advance conservation of curlews and their habitats by choosing an available survey route and getting out into the field!

It's easy. Survey routes consist of early morning road-side stops repeated every half mile. At each stop, you will get out of the car for five minutes and look and listen for curlews. Along the way you will collect important data on the time, habitat, and presence or absence of curlews. And, the great thing is that you only need to look for one big beautiful bellowing bird. The Sandhill are just a bonus! All you have to do is choose a route and catch up on Curlew identification and you are all set to go!

The best way to get involved is to visit our favorite Birds & Beasleys store (in Helena's walking mall) **starting April 1st**, where you can find the available survey routes and details such as the protocol, data sheets, and maps. If you can't make it there, just contact me, and I can help you out. And, feel free to take a partner, a new birder, do a route more than once, or do more than one route. The Curlews are just waiting to be found!

To brush up on your Curlew identification before heading into the field visit Montana Audubon's webpage: http://mtaudubon.org/birds-science/long-billed-curlew-initiative/ for a link to the Curlew's call and much more. Also visit Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All about Birds: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Long-billed_Curlew/id.

For more information or for any questions, contact Amy Seaman: aseaman@mtaudubon.org or 406.210.9449.

Sacajawea Audubon Society Officers and Committee Chairs

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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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