NOVEMBER 2019

Sacajawea Audubon News

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 NOVEMBER 2019

7	SAS Board Meeting at the Lehrkind Mansion
9	Cornell Feederwatch Begins
11	SAS Monthly Program
20	SAS Book Group

Monthly Program:

Critically Endangered Species of South America: *Forrest Rowland*

Monday, November 11th, 2019, 7 pm, Hope Lutheran Church

Sacajawea Audubon Society is pleased to feature one of our members at our November 11th program, Forrest Rowland. Come learn about some of the rarest, most endangered birds on Earth in this presentation that will span countries from Guatemala to Brazil.

We will spend some time talking about not only the natural history and discovery of these wonderful species, but also about the ecology of their region and what makes them so special. From Horned Guan to Blue-eyed Ground Dove, Forrest Rowland will relate his personal experiences with these birds and discuss the most immediate concerns and threats to the well-being of these particular species and the important habitats that they are the icons for.

Forrest Rowland took his first trip to the Neotropics at the tender age of nine and this has blossomed into a lifelong love affair with the region's birds and wildlife. Forrest has a technical education in Genetics but has since spent many years in the field, honing his birding skills throughout the Americas. He is now primary tour leader in South America for Rockjumper Birding Tours.

Forrest's first extended stint to South America involved several weeks at Tiputini Biological Research Station in the Upper Amazonian region of Ecuador. This encouraged him to ship all his earthly belongings to Quito, where he became a resident after realizing that he wanted to dedicate his career and life to bird guiding. Since this move in 2003, Forrest has guided over three dozen tours and participated in numerous scientific excursions in South America, including working with ProAves and other local conservation entities in Colombia. Forrest lives in Livingston, Montana.

Blue-eyed ground dove. Photo by Forrest Rowland.

2019 Raptor Festival Thank You!

The 24th Annual Bridger Raptor Festival —once again—was a hugely successful FREE community event. Estimates were between 4-5,000 attendees. The weather was predictably unpredictable and some dedicated participants were seen playing the binocular game in a snowstorm on Saturday! An impressive 42 people hiked up to the Ridge to watch the raptor migration in action. Many thanks to **Bob Smith** and **Matt Keefer** for helping **Adam Richardson** handle the crowds on the observation platform.

We'd like to thank our small army of volunteers, who helped our events run smoothly and provide a fun and educational experience for all who attended:

Activity Coordinators

- Travis Kidd - *Chapter festival coordinator, SAS Table*
- Paulette Epple - *Build A Nifty Nest Box*
- Beth Madden - *Great Migration Game*
- Diane Winters - *Binocular Blitz Game*
- Emma Narotzky - *Sketch A Bird*
- Loreene Reid - *Passport to Education*

Special thanks to **Simkins-Hallin Lumber** for donating all the lumber and hardware for our nest box kits; and to **Travis Kidd** and the **Sauerwein Family** for putting the nest box kits together.

Festival Weekend Volunteers

Delilah Benigna
Annie Buchwald
Huyen Bui
Gina Carolan
Hobart Collins
David Cole
Taylor Dirden
John Edwards
Andy Epple
Leo Freeman
Sarah Fry
Jakub Galczynski
Molly Ghekiere
Michele Giffith
Sharon Hanton
Hilary Johnson
Ralph Johnson
Matt Keefer
Bill Klenn
Hunter Lode
Mary Maj
Holly Marie
Terri Narotzky
Chris Nixon
Peggy Osbourn
Sandy Pittendrigh
Anne Ready
Joan Ryshavy
Dana Sauerwein
Bob Smith
Sherry Staub
Deb Stempf
Judy Tsiang
Kevin Ward

Sharp-shinned Hawk. Photo by Kyle Dudgeon.

2019 Bridger Raptor Festival bird watchers and nest box builders. Photos by Paulette Epple.

BRIDGER BOWL

Win one of 2 Bridger Bowl Season Passes for 2019-2020

(value of $900 each)

Support the Bridger Mountains Raptor Survey (BMRS) by buying one or more raffle tickets! The Bridger Ridge is one of the most important locations for monitoring migrating Golden Eagles in the western United States. Now in its 29th year, the BMRS is critical in providing needed data to assess population trends in Golden Eagles and other raptors.

RAFFLE TICKETS ARE $10 EACH OR 6 FOR $50.

Note: *If you have already purchased your season pass, Bridger Bowl will reimburse you if you win.*

The drawing will be held **Monday, December 9th, 7 pm,** at the Sacajawea Audubon special monthly program at the **Ellen Theatre** in downtown Bozeman.

To purchase your raffle tickets, contact Loreene Reid at (406) 600-6666 or loreener@sacajaweaaudubon.org or contact Lou Ann Harris at (406) 600-3585 or pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

Tickets will also be available at the SAS November 11th meeting at Hope Lutheran Church, at Vickie's Pierogies during the Christmas Stroll on December 7th, and prior to the December 9th program at the Ellen Theatre.

Project Feeder Watch Begins Soon

Don't forget to join Cornell Lab's annual Project FeederWatch, a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, and other North American locales. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November 9–April 3 and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. This data helps scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

For more information visit: feederwatch.org/about/project-overview

Black-capped Chickadee. Photo by Lou Ann Harris.

Welcome our new MSU Board Member

Originally from Spokane, Washington, Ashley Meyer moved to Bozeman to pursue dual degrees in Business Management and Psychology. Currently a senior at Montana State University, she was nominated by a professor to participate as a Boardroom Bobcat—a program that assigns students to a non-profit board as an ex-officio member for a year. Ashley has served on the MSU Triathlon Club's executive board as their secretary and president and has travelled to compete nationally in triathlons. She recently has returned from a semester abroad in Germany studying at the Universität of Mannheim. She is passionate about sustainable business practices along with protection of our public lands. In her free time, she enjoys anything and everything outdoors, including but not limited to: climbing, ice climbing, backcountry skiing, Nordic skiing, trail running, biking, and backpacking.

Birds of the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve

You probably know that earlier this year Sacajawea Audubon became the owner of 33 acres of wetlands on the east side of Bozeman, now known as the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP). The wetlands were gifted to us by Ileana Indreland and Mike Delaney. A big question is: "What birds are using our wetland?" This year SAS set out to answer this question by conducting surveys weekly from mid-April to mid-July. Our volunteers documented 63 species during this time period with 25 of those species demonstrating some level of breeding behavior. When a search of eBird sightings is added in for this "hotspot," the list of birds seen so far this year rises to 80 species, though some of those species are just one-time flyover sightings such as a Bald Eagle and a flock of Franklin Gulls. A list of the IAWP bird species identified in 2019 is shown in the box to the right.

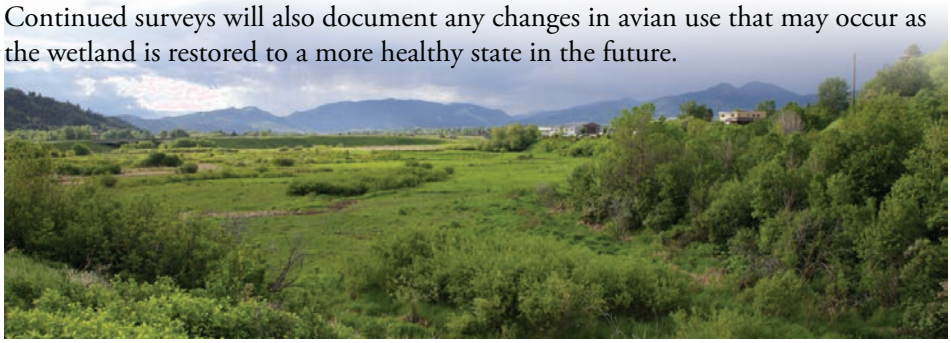
On the very first visit to the wetlands by the survey team we were all treated to a courtship flight of a male Northern Harrier as he vied for the attention of a nearby female. She must have accepted his proposal because the harrier pair was consistently seen in the wetlands hunting, vocalizing, and transferring food between them. We were thrilled when the nest was discovered and we believe the pair raised either 4 or 5 young successfully.

Other highlights included numerous Wilson Snipe, often in courtship displays; whinnying Sora; a Sandhill Crane pair raising a single colt; numerous Common Yellowthroats; and up to 70 Red-winged Blackbirds visible during the breeding season.

Surprisingly there were very few species of waterfowl this year. Only Mallards, Canada geese, and an occasional Green-winged Teal were seen. This is in sharp contrast to surveys that Sacajawea Audubon conducted on this land from 2006 to 2009. In the first two years of that study a beaver dam blocked a culvert, backing up water and effectively maintaining open shallow ponds. In 2006 and 2007 eleven species of ducks and geese and 2 species of grebes were often documented utilizing these ponds. Great Blue Heron were much more frequently seen also. However, in May of 2008, the beaver dam was pulled from the culvert and the area was partially drained, leaving little or no standing open water as it is now, mostly sub-irrigated land and narrow drainage ditches.

One of the most rare and prized habitats on the wetlands is the temporarily flooded and sub-irrigated willow and alder forest to the north of the elevated railroad berm. This area along with a swath of aspen forest provide tremendous habitat for a variety of songbirds including Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Calliope Hummingbird, Song Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak, House Wren, American Goldfinch, and Lazuli Bunting. During the spring and fall migration anything could be possible in these habitats. This year, Green-tailed Towhee, Wilson's Warbler and Swainson's Thrush were all spotted briefly.

Survey data in the coming years combined with eBird records will allow us to develop a comprehensive bird list for the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve. Continued surveys will also document any changes in avian use that may occur as the wetland is restored to a more healthy state in the future.



BIRD LIST FOR 2019

- Canada Goose
- Mallard
- Green-winged Teal
- Ring-necked Pheasant
- Rock Pigeon
- Eurasian Collared-Dove
- Mourning Dove
- Calliope Hummingbird
- Sora
- Sandhill Crane
- Killdeer
- Long-billed Curlew
- Wilson's Snipe
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Franklin's Gull
- Great Blue Heron
- Turkey Vulture
- Northern Harrier
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Bald Eagle
- Swainson's Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Belted Kingfisher
- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Northern Flicker
- American Kestrel
- Merlin
- Western Wood-Pewee
- Willow Flycatcher
- Eastern Kingbird
- Warbling Vireo
- Black-billed Magpie
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Mountain Chickadee
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow
- Tree Swallow
- Bank Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Cliff Swallow
- House Wren
- Marsh Wren
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- European Starling
- Gray Catbird
- Veery
- Swainson's Thrush
- American Robin
- Cedar Waxwing
- House Sparrow
- Evening Grosbeak
- House Finch
- Pine Siskin
- American Goldfinch
- Chipping Sparrow
- Clay-colored Sparrow
- Dark-eyed Junco
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Savannah Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- Green-tailed Towhee
- Yellow-headed Blackbird
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Brewer's Blackbird
- Common Grackle
- Northern Waterthrush
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- MacGillivray's Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- American Redstart
- Yellow Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Wilson's Warbler
- Western Tanager
- Black-headed Grosbeak
- Lazuli Bunting

BIRD NOTES

by John Parker

Beside the basic urges to migrate, such as the length of day and food availability, weather is the primary determining factor of where birds will stop during migration. Like every migration period, this fall's migration was affected by the timing of weather systems. As a number of this month's bird sightings show, the best time to be looking for birds is just before, during and after a storm.

The major storm system that moved through Montana during last four days of September had a dramatic effect on two species of raptors. Typically, the last significant flights of **Turkey Vultures** and **Swainson's Hawks** occur the last ten days of September. This year with a slight weather delay, several large kettles of Turkey Vultures were seen locally on October 1st. 29 vultures were seen east of the Bozeman hospital, 27 vultures were spotted north of Gallatin Gateway, and 21 vultures were sighted at Three Forks. Not a local sighting, but an incredible 399 Turkey Vultures were counted passing the Hawkwatch site southeast of Lolo in the Bitteroot Valley on that same day. There were many scattered sightings of Swainson's Hawks the first two days of October, with 9 being seen near the north entrance of Yellowstone National Park on October 2nd.

Normally, a flock of 8 **Surf Scoters** would make anyone's day. But on October 10th, after finding the scoters at Davis Lane Pond in northwest Bozeman, Andrew Guttenberg went over to Flanders Mill Road Pond, in the same neighborhood, and discovered a **Red Phalarope**! This shorebird has been seen fewer than twenty times in Montana, and this was the first ever sighting in Gallatin County.

This year there has been at least 4 different **Sabine's Gulls** at Harrison Reservoir from September 17th till October 5th. More remarkable were the 3 Sabine's Gulls spotted in mountainous terrain. The first of these Sabine's Gulls was seen September 16th by Forrest Rowland and Lou Ann Harris up Tom Miner Basin near the north end of Paradise Valley, the second bird was found September 21st at Round Prairie along Soda Butte Creek in Yellowstone Park, and finally the third out-of-place Sabine's Gull was seen by Andrew Guttenberg on October 2nd at the Big Sky waste water treatment ponds.

Red Phalarope. Photo by Andrew Guttenberg.

Great-tailed Grackle is another bird that has been seen fewer than 20 times in Montana except for the long-staying individuals in Bozeman 2012–2014, and Dillon 2014–2017. Joining the list of this rarely occurring species was the Great-tailed Grackle seen in Belgrade October 10th by Harold Ziolkowski.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are always an uncommon bird in this corner of Montana, especially so in the fall, and this year there were two sightings. Chris Nixon had a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at his feeder in north Bozeman on September 23rd. In Gardiner, Kira Cassidy had a Rose-breasted Grosbeak coming to her feeder on the very late dates of October 6–9.

Don Profota saw a **Willet** at Flanders Mill Pond on October 10th, and then three days later Vic Fesolowitz found another Willet at Harrison Reservoir. Both of these sightings eclipsed the old Montana late date record by more than two weeks. A **Long-billed Curlew** first found at Harrison Reservoir September 12th and then seen again two days later by John Parker, is a new late date for this area of Montana.

Unusual warblers seemed to have bypassed our area for the most part this year. Perhaps the highlight of the season was the **Blackpoll Warbler** Robin Wolcott found in southeast Bozeman on October 13th.

On the very late date of October 12th, Katy Duffy had 5(!) **Western Tanagers** eating the pears off of the tree in her Gardiner backyard, while occasionally hawking aerial insects. Yet another late Western Tanager was feasting on the apples on a tree in Paulette Epple's northeast Bozeman yard on October 12-13. *(cont. on page 7)*

Plants for Birds: Rocky Mountain Juniper

- **Scientific Name:** *Juniperus scopulorum* (Cypress Family)
- **Height:** 10 to 30 feet
- **Hardiness:** Zone 3
- **Wildlife Value:** Berries are excellent food for birds. Dense foliage provides cover and nesting sites. Foliage is browse for deer.

Rocky Mountain juniper is a native tree commonly seen in our western landscape providing both food and dense protective cover for birds and other wildlife. The female tree produces small blue berry-like fruits that cling to the tree in summer and winter nourishing birds during harsh weather conditions. These berries are a favorite of cedar and Bohemian waxwings, as well as Townsend's solitares, robins, jays, and evening grosbeaks. The dense foliage of juniper provides needed shelter and the trees are frequently used as nesting and roosting sites for chipping sparrows, juncos, robins, towhees, yellow-rumped warblers and many more.

In the Rocky Mountains, juniper is known for its adaptation to dry areas. It grows on dry rocky outcrops, exposed bluffs, butte tops, draws, sagebrush and grass plains, stream terraces, and in open forests. Due to its extreme hardiness it is often used in making windbreaks and shelterbelts. Numerous cultivars have been developed in the horticultural trade and Rocky Mountain juniper has become a very popular ornamental tree in the garden for its attractive evergreen color. Large potted plants can be purchased or you can start small with bare-root seedlings and cuttings.

Rocky mountain juniper can grow from 10 to 30 feet high and 12 to 20 feet wide. It has scaly-like leaves and is dioecious meaning the pollen cones (male) and the seeded berries (female) grow on different trees. The berries are round, fleshy, are a bluish purple color and can persist on the tree for over a year. This species is hardy to zone 3 and thrives in moist loamy soils but also does well in dry, clay, and rocky areas. It is known to tolerate salts and a high pH. It needs full sun and does not tolerate shade. Rocky Mountain Juniper is an alternate host to cedar-apple rust so should ideally be planted away from apples, serviceberries, and hawthorne. It is also often browsed by deer so it may need fence protection when young.

Some species of birds absolutely need dense evergreens for nesting sites, protective cover from predators, and shelter from storms. Rocky Mountain juniper is a great addition to your backyard wildlife habitat. ~ *Leslie Eddington*

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Member at Large	Forrest Rowland forrestrowland@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Billy Burton billyburton@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Travis Kidd traviskidd@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Debi Naccarto debinaccarto@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Stephanie Nelson stephanienelson@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Board Room Bobcat	Ashley Meyer ashleymeyer@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Committee Chairs & Project Leaders:

Conservation Chair	Paulette Epple conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Education Chair	Travis Kidd traviskidd@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Bird Sightings	John Parker birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Field Trips	John Parker birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Newsletter	Stephanie Nelson newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Monthly Program	OPEN programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Website	Stephanie Nelson stephanienelson@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Membership	Loreene Reid membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Hospitality	Sherry Staub hospitality@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Wetlands	Karin Jennings wetlands@sacajaweaaudubon.org

It's Time To Renew Your SAS Membership!

If you are a chapter member of Sacajawea Audubon, your membership will expire at the end of December. If you join or renew now, your membership will be good through the end of December 2020. Visit https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/join-sas to renew online OR clip and fill out the form below to renew by mail. Remember, 100% of your local membership directly supports our chapter's educational and conservation programs!

Sacajawea Audubon Society Membership 2020

Individual or Family

☐ Basic Membership $25

☐ Supporting Membership $50
(Supporting local conservation & education project)

☐ Additional Donation .....$_____
- ☐ *Bridger Raptor Study*
- ☐ *Education*
- ☐ *Story Mill Park*
- ☐ *Bird Feeding Station*
- ☐ *Wetland Campaign*
- ☐ *Wherever is Needed*

Name _____

Address _____
(Street or PO Box)

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(City) *(State)* *(Zip)*

Phone ( ) _____

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❖ Sacajawea Audubon News is sent by email. There is a $10 annual fee for a paper copy mailed to you.
☐ *I would like a paper newsletter mailed to me and have included an additional $10 to cover the annual cost.*

❖ We do not share your information except with Montana Audubon, so your contact information is safe with us.

Mail this form with your check to:

Sacajawea Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
PO Box 1711
Bozeman, MT 59771-1711

Thank you for your membership and donation. We look forward to birding with you!

newsletter 11/20

BIRD NOTES *(cont. from page 5)*

Blue Jays, everywhere Blue Jays. This fall is shaping up to be what could be the largest ever invasion of Blue Jays in this region. The first report in Bozeman for a Blue Jay was on September 25th, and within a week they were being seen throughout our area from Gardiner, Silver Star, Three Forks, Livingston, and to points north of Bozeman. Flocks of Blue Jays numbering 12, 7, and 6 have been reported from Ennis, Cameron, and Bozeman, respectively. I would estimate that during the first week of October there were at least 25 Blue Jays in the Gallatin Valley alone. It will be interesting to see if this wave of jays will linger through the winter, or if most will continue on to other locales.

ODDS AND ENDS

Monthly Meetings Snack Schedule

If your first or last name begins with the first letter of the month, please try to bring a snack. If your name doesn't match any month...pick a month of your choice (just one) and bring a snack. Hopefully this will eliminate the need to sign up. No time to bake? No problem. Bring a bunch of bananas, a bag of apples, or chips. This will also ensure that folks with gluten issues have something to snack on. We'll see how this works.

SO, if your name (first or last) begins with **N**, please bring a snack for the November meeting!

Thoughts? Suggestions? Contact Sherry Staub, **(563) 370-0757** or mayawindsong@gmail.com

November Book Club: Change of Location

November 20th, 4–5:15 PM, Pilgrim Congregational Church, 2118 S. 3rd.

This month's book: "Soul of the Octopus" by Sy Montgomery.

"Enter the mysterious intelligent alien world of the octopus. Experience a real intelligence based on a sense of touch that humans can barely imagine."

~Temple Grandin, author of Animals in Translation

For more info contact Sherry Staub: **(563) 370-0757** or mayawindsong@gmail.com

Sacajawea Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1711
Bozeman, MT 59771-1771

Change Service Requested

Sacajawea Audubon Society, affiliated with the National Audubon Society, meets on the second Monday of each month, September through May.

Sacajawea Audubon Society Monthly Newsletter is available electronically to all Sacajawea Audubon Society members September through May. Members and non-members can receive a mailed paper newsletter for an annual $10 subscription fee. Please send your check to the address above.

Deadline for article submission is the 15th of the month preceding the month the articles will appear. Send articles electronically to Stephanie Nelson at: newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

Change of Address: If you have a change of address or are away, please notify membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org. Undeliverable mailed newsletters are returned to us for an extra fee.

Find more at the **Sacajawea Audubon Society website** at: sacajaweaaudubon.org

Bird Feeding Station Volunteers Needed

Have you checked out the bird feeding station maintained by Sacajawea Audubon at Story Mill Community Park? Located next to a bird blind on the River Trail in the Nature Sanctuary, it is an excellent place to sit quietly and observe birds attracted by the feed and great habitat. We have so many to thank for making this feeding station a reality, including:

- **GCC Trident Cement Plant** for constructing and installing the feeder pole;
- **Wild Birds Unlimited** for donating all the feeders;
- The **City of Bozeman** and **The Trust for Public Land** for their partnership in developing this feeding station; and
- **Maddy Pope**, whose generous donation paid for bird seed and other start-up costs.

Of course, it's important to keep the feeders full, so…

We are looking for volunteers to help with the fun work of occasionally filling the feeders. You can sign up for as many days as you like. Contact **Paulette Epple** at conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org to get trained and help out. You can also donate to our bird feeding fund to keep our birds happy. Go to our website: https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/donate/

Story Mill Community Park Feeder Station. Photo by Lou Ann Harris.