OCTOBER 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 OCTOBER 2019

3	SAS Board Meeting at the Lehrkind Mansion
4	Bridger Raptor Fest Film, *Sky Migration,* at the Ellen Theater
Oct. 4–6	Bridger Raptor Festival
14	SAS Monthly Program
16	SAS Book Group
19	Ennis Lake Waterfowl Field Trip

Monthly Program: Author Jim Robbins

Monday, October 14th, 2019, 7 pm, Hope Lutheran Church

Sacajawea Audubon Society is excited to host author Jim Robbins for our October 14th program. Jim will talk about how scientists and others research and interpret birds to tell us something about the natural and human world, and offers his own interpretation of what birds tell us.

Bernd Heinrich, in a review of Jim's book in the *Wall Street Journal* called it: "A must-read…awakening one's consciousness to what might otherwise be taken for granted."

Jim Robbins has written for the *New York Times* for more than 35 years, on a wide range of topics, but with a special focus on science and environmental issues. He is also a frequent contributor to *E360*, a Yale Forestry School environmental journalism website. He has written for *Audubon, Conde Nast Traveler, Smithsonian, Vanity Fair, The London Sunday Times, Conservation,* and numerous other magazines. He has covered environmental stories across the U.S. and in far-flung places around the world, including Mongolia, Mexico, Chile, Peru, the Yanomami Territory of Brazil, Norway, Sweden, and other countries.

His primary theme has been to bring attention to how little we know about ourselves and the world, from trees and birds to our bodies and minds.

In 2017 Spiegel & Grau published his sixth book, *The Wonder of Birds.* His first book was *Last Refuge; Environmental Showdown in the American West,* published in 1993 by William Morrow, a book about changing our impact on the world to bring it in line with our knowledge of ecosystems.

In 2000 Grove Atlantic published *A Symphony in the Brain, the Evolution of the New Brainwave Biofeedback.* He is also the co-author of *The Open Focus Brain: Harnessing the Power of Attention to Heal Mind and Body,* published in 2007 by Shambhala Publications, about the critical and overlooked role that attention plays in our lives. And he is the co-author of *Dissolving Pain,* a 2010 book about the role of attention in pain, also published by Shambhala. His interest on the nexus between the human central nervous system and the natural world grew out of these three books.

Sacajawea Audubon Society programs are free and open to the public. Our programs feature a special guest speaker the 2nd Monday of each month, September through May, at Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf (off of S. 19th). Join us for a social at 6:30 pm, announcements at 7:00 pm, followed by the program.

BRIDGER RAPTOR FEST
OCTOBER 4–6, 2019

Please join Sacajawea Audubon Society for the **Bridger Raptor Festival, Oct. 4-6, 2019**.

Once again SAS will be co-hosting with the Bridger Bowl Foundation, Museum of the Rockies, Custer Gallatin National Forest, the Montana Raptor Conservation Center, MOSS, Yellowstone Forever and YNP. There will be lots of fun and educational activities for all ages, and it's **FREE!**

Kicking off the festival Friday night is a screening of "Sky Migrations" at the Ellen Theatre, directed by Charles Post and Max Lowe. This film follows the annual raptor migration and the network of volunteers and biologists who document it.

The Bridger Raptor Festival is an annual event held in early October in and around Bozeman, Montana. The festival, which is free to the public, centers around the largest known Golden Eagle migration in the United States. Since 1991 a raptor migration count has taken place every fall at the Bridger Bowl ski area in the Gallatin National Forest just north of Bozeman. Festival activities center around raptor viewing and include nature walks and talks, educational and entertaining programs, and activities for people of all ages.

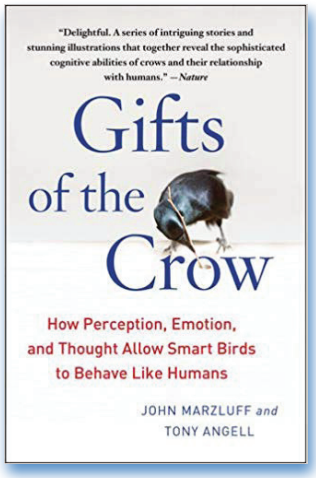
For more information, please visit:
www.bridgerraptorfest.org

Book Club for October 16th:
Gifts of the Crow by **John Marzluff**

With its abundance of funny, awe-inspiring, and poignant stories, ***Gifts of the Crow*** portrays creatures who are nothing short of amazing.

The SAS Book Club meets on the second Wednesday of each month beginning in September (except no meeting in December) from 4–5:15 pm. Participants will take turns leading the discussion so if there is a book you would like to facilitate, please let **Sherry Staub** know. Her contact information is:

scstaub@mchsi.com | **(563) 370-0757**



BIRD NOTES

by John Parker

Some of the unusual sightings this past month illustrate the variability in both continental and regional bird migrations. These variations are what make fall birding especially exciting. Why would a highly pelagic jaeger migrate over the center of the continent? How does an eastern hummingbird end up in a high mountain valley in western Montana? What role do birders play in expanding our knowledge of birds in this region?

An adult **Long-tailed Jaeger** was first seen by Dave Story at Harrison Reservoir on August 19th, and subsequently seen by several others over the next four days. This is only the thirteenth time a Long-tailed Jaeger has been reported in Montana, and represents the earliest fall record for the state. It was interesting to me to be watching this jaeger feeding on the abundant grasshoppers instead of pirating food from gulls. That's adaptable. Some of you may recall that Montana's twelfth Long-tailed Jaeger was an immature bird seen two years ago at the Three Forks Ponds.

On the evening of August 30th Tamie and John Parker noticed a different hummingbird at one of their feeders. Their first thought was that it was a **Black-chinned Hummingbird**, which is fairly unusual for southwestern Montana, but something seemed different about this bird. After closer examination, consulting field guides, and talking to people with more experience, it seemed that this hummingbird was most likely a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**. This would be the first documented Ruby-throated Hummingbird in southwestern Montana, though three years ago what was thought to be a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird was eventually determined to most likely be a Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Black-chinned Hummingbird hybrid.

Long-tailed Jaeger. Photo by John Parker.

Oddly, until this past month, the **Pygmy Nuthatch** had never been documented in Gallatin or the surrounding counties. That changed on August 27th when Kyle Dudgeon got a photograph of two Pygmy Nuthatches while on duty as one of the hawkwatchers on top of the Bridger Ridge. The following week, on September 5th, Kyle and the other hawkwatcher Adam Richardson had two more (or the same) Pygmy Nuthatches at the same location. The breeding range of the Pygmy Nuthatch nearly surrounds this area, but in Montana they are generally a ponderosa pine obligate, which are nearly absent locally and may explain their rarity. Pygmy Nuthatches aren't known to migrate any distance so these sightings most likely represent a post-breeding dispersal movement. One question leads to many more. Why have Pygmy Nuthatches never been detected locally before? Was it a good year for breeding success? Is it a bad year for the nuthatch's primary food source? Or was it having skilled birders in the right place at the right time?

Field Trip:

Ennis Lake Waterfowl

Saturday, October 19, 2019

Trip Leader: John Parker
Phone: (406) 586-5863
conundrumjp@gmail.com

Meet at 8 am at the Museum of the Rockies. Carpool and leave at 8:15 am.

This should be near the peak time for migrating waterfowl. Ennis Lake is one of the premiere staging areas for migrating waterfowl in southwestern Montana. Thousands of ducks can be spread across the lake on any given day. As is typical with high concentrations of birds, there is always the possibility of a rarity being found. Bring a lunch as we'll be out until at least mid-afternoon. Also, remember to bring plenty of warm clothes as it will likely be cold and windy.

Participants limited to 12

To reserve a spot on the trip or for more information, please contact the trip leader.

Photo by Lou Ann Harris.

White-bridled Finch *Melanodera melanodera* © Pio Marshall Macaulay Library

OCTOBER eBIRD BIG DAY!

What is a Big Day, you ask? Well, a Big Day has become a May tradition for tens of thousands of eBirders: 24 hours to put your favorite park/county/state/province country/continent on the global birding stage.

Last year the October Big Day was born. **On October 19th, 2019, October Big Day is back!** Can we beat last year's total of **6,331** species worldwide on a single October day?

How to participate

Get an eBird account: eBird is a worldwide bird checklist program used by millions of birders. It's what allows us to compile everyone's sightings into a single massive October Big Day list—while at the same time collecting the data for scientists to use to better understand birds. Sign up here. It's 100% free.

Watch birds on 19 October: It's that simple. You don't need to be a bird expert, or go out all day long. Even 10 minutes in your backyard will help. October Big Day runs from midnight to midnight in your local time zone. You can report birds from anywhere in the world.

Enter what you see and hear on eBird: You can enter your sightings via our website or—even easier—download the free eBird Mobile app. You can enter and submit lists while you're still out birding, and the app will even keep track of how far you've walked, so you can focus on watching birds. While you're downloading free apps, try out the Cornell Lab's Merlin Bird ID app for help with identification. Please enter sightings before 23 October to be included in our initial results announcement.

Watch the sightings roll in: During the day, keep an eye on how the lists are growing in different parts of the world. Follow along with sightings from more than 150 countries. Stats will be updated in real-time on our October Big Day page: ebird.org/news/october-big-day-19-october-2019.

~Source: Team eBird

Photos by Lou Ann Harris

BURDOCK ROUNDUP 2019

The 2019 burdock cutting season is over…whew! Once again, many of our trails, parks, alleys, and favorite birding haunts are free of burdock burrs and safe for birds. Sacajawea Audubon volunteers can be proud of our collective hard work removing 3,200 pounds of burdock from the environment this year.

Many of the burdock stands are greatly diminished and some are almost eradicated when compared to years past. Other long-established colonies remain persistent and stubborn. Thankfully, several of our members have started to adopt patches in their neighborhoods, cutting, bagging, and disposing of plants every year in August before they go to seed. It's great to see our effort to improve habitat for birds expanding!

Sadly, however, this year our volunteers found three songbirds that were caught in burdock before it could be removed. A Wilson's warbler died entangled at Missouri Headwaters State Park, while a chickadee succumbed in the Sourdough Nature Trail corridor. And when Kathryn Kelly went to chop down burdock on her ranch she found a warbler, trapped and struggling, but alive! She was able to carefully disentangle the bird and release it—a bit worse for the experience but alive and freed.

None of this could have been accomplished without our hard-working and dedicated volunteers. **THANK YOU** to each and every one of you:

Lucy Bikulc; Susan Bilo; Nancy Blake; Michelle Brodie; Jie Cao; Gina Carolan; David Cole; Hobart Collins; Cathy Ebelke; John Edwards; Andy Epple; Paulette Epple; Leo Freeman; Lou Ann Harris; John Harris; Janne Hayward; Deborah Hines; Graham Hollingsworth; Glennis Indreland; Kathryn Kelly; Peggy Kimmet; Ron Kimmet; Mark Lusch; Beth Madden; Mary Maj; Ashley Martens; Henry Miklush; Lisa Miklush; Bob Muth; Chris Nixon; Peggy Osbourn; Sadie Martens Palmer; John Parker; Anne Ready; Mary Lee Reese; Loreene Reid; Marlena Renwyck; Becky Ward; and Kevin Ward. Special thanks also to our partners and volunteers from the Gallatin County Weed District and Board: John Ansley; Danielle Jones; Mike Jones; and Noelle Orloff.

Plants for Birds: **Prairie Coneflower** (Mexican Hat)

- **Scientific Name:** *Ratibida columnifera* (Asteraceae Family)
- **Height:** 18 inches to 3 feet
- **Hardiness:** Zone 4
- **Wildlife Value:** Provides seeds/cover for birds; attracts pollinators

Prairie coneflower is a native herbaceous perennial that makes a wonderful addition to a low-maintenance, bird-friendly garden. Its delightful blossoms, with their downward sweeping petals, have a tall center cone that becomes packed with seeds in the fall, providing food for seed-eating birds such as finches and sparrows. The ray flowers attract and feed bees and butterflies. This plant is also known as a xeric or waterwise plant, is fast growing, is easy to grow from seed, and makes a lovely display in the garden.

A drought-tolerant native, prairie coneflower prefers dry open grassland sites, meadows, pastures, and mountain foothills but is also found along roadsides and in disturbed areas. It readily establishes itself and is a good re-seeder—thus its use in the restoration of waste or damaged landscapes.

This plant flowers in July and August with seeds ripening in September. It produces bright yellow ray flowers which can also be streaked reddish brown or be completely red-brown. The sombrero-shaped flower heads grow 3–7 per stalk while the stalk itself can grow from 1.5–3 feet tall. Growing well in various soil types, from loamy to sandy-gravelly, prairie coneflower prefers un-amended, well-drained soils and needs full hot sun to thrive.

Prairie coneflower is easy to get started in the garden either by seed or by plants available at the local nurseries. Seeds can be broadcast in fall or spring but won't produce flowers until the second year. It's very hardy and once established can aggressively reseed itself. Don't be in a hurry to cut this flower down after it is done blooming. Allow the seed heads to ripen and remain standing to provide food for the birds over the long winter months. You will be putting out the welcome mat for American Goldfinch, Pine Siskins, and White-crowned Sparrows!

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Board of Directors:

President	Lou Ann Harris pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Vice President	John Edwards johnedwards@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Treasurer	Janne Hayward tres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Member at Large	Debi Naccarto debinaccarto@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Member at Large	Stephanie Nelson stephanienelson@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

The Montana Mural Project

by April Craighead

The Montana Mural Project was developed by the Craighead Institute to highlight and educate the public regarding Montana's threatened and endangered (T&E) species through art. Montana has twelve animal and plant T&E species that can be found throughout the state. The three bird species included are the Whooping Crane *(Grus americana)*, which is typically a migrant in the spring and fall; Least Tern *(Sternula antillarum)*, which breeds along the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers in the eastern part of the state; and Piping Plover *(Charadrius melodus)*, which breeds in the eastern part of the state in sand and gravel bars along the Missouri River. The goal is to have all twelve species painted throughout Bozeman and the surrounding area.

Montana Mural Project: "Whooping Cranes" by Juliene Sinclair. Location: 810 E. Davis, Bozeman, MT.

The inspiration for this project comes from the work of artist and gallery owner Avi Gitler and the National Audubon Society, which started painting murals of all the bird species threatened by climate change throughout New York City. They currently have painted 117 of the 314 species and they are incredible (visit www.audubon.org/amp).

Audubon Mural Project: "American Redstart" by James Alicea. Location: 3612 Broadway, New York, NY.

With the help of a private donor and the Sweet Pea Festival, enough money was raised to begin to bring Montana's T&E species to life on the doors, sheds, and buildings of Bozeman. The Whooping Crane is the first mural and was completed this August by artist Juliene Sinclair (www.julienesinclair.com). Her rendition of two whooping cranes resides on a shed door at 810 East Davis in Bozeman and is spectacular.

Artists' renditions have been selected for most of the other T&E species, with multiple locations for the next murals, but funding is needed. Each mural costs $1,700 to cover the materials and an honorarium for the artist.

If you would like to sponsor the Piping Plover, Least Tern, or any of the other murals please contact April Craighead at the Craighead Institute: **(406) 585-8705** or april@craigheadinstitute.org. For more information, please see our website: www.craigheadinstitute.org. We are currently working on painting the white and pallid sturgeon mural that should be completed by the end of October.

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

Oct 16th: Science Inquiry Series Lecture

Restoring Forests in a Time of Change

How can we measure the impact of climate change fire on forest ecosystems? Dr. C. Alina Cansler, research scientist in the School of Environmental Science at the University of Washington, will discuss how data from satellites and airborne lasers, coupled with on-the-ground measurements and simulation models, can help us understand the effects of fires, predict post-fire tree survival and tree regeneration, and design silviculture treatments that can make forests more resilient against climate change and future fires.

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

Sponsored by the Gallatin Valley Friends of the Sciences and hosted by the Museum of the Rockies, the talks are presented on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm, followed by a brief social time with light refreshments in the museum lobby where audience members can engage the speaker

The talks are free to the public. All lectures have a limited capacity and are open on a first-come, first-served basis. Doors open 30 minutes prior to each lecture. Attendees may not save seats for others.