JANUARY 2021

Sacajawea Audubon News

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

VIRTUAL PROGRAM Monday, January 11th, 2021:

"Mountain Caribou: The Vanishing Ghosts of the North" *with Cory DeStein, Wildlife Photographer*

Once common throughout northwest Montana, the mountain caribou is now considered one of North America's most endangered species. Inhabiting Montana until the 1980s, sightings had persisted in the northwest corner of the state as recently as 2019. Mountain caribou are specialized foragers on arboreal lichens in old growth forests and survived by predator avoidance. These adaptions led to a dramatic decline in numbers across their entire range as industrial development expanded. Logging, road development, and backcountry recreation have shifted the predator–prey dynamics of the caribou's winter habitat and dropped their population to just 1,900 in Canada as well as extirpated them from the continental United States.

Join wildlife photographer Cory DeStein for an evening of photos and stories of his last three years discovering this species. Cory has strived to document the mountain caribou's story through his own photography and encounters to inspire others with the same appreciation he has developed for these grey ghosts of the mountains.

Cory DeStein is a wildlife photographer in Missoula, Montana. Having relocated from western Pennsylvania in 2013, the wilderness on his doorstep invigorated his passion for the outdoors. Since arriving, exploration of the area's ample backcountry with camera in hand has occupied much of Cory's free time. This immersion has fostered keen eyes that now play a large role in tracking down seldom-seen wildlife. Combining passion with an artistic vision, Cory strives to make images that advocate for the appreciation and protection of many beautiful landscapes and the creatures dwelling within them.

Caribou pair. Photos by Cory DeStein.

If you would like to attend the Monday, January 11, 2021 Virtual Program, please register at: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3465492837129290510. Share our virtual program using hashtags #sasbirds #The Vanishing Ghosts of the North #conservation

SAS programs are free and open to the public. Our programs feature a special guest speaker the 2nd Monday of each month, September through May. ***Join us for a virtual social at 6:30 pm. Announcements and the program begin at 7:00 pm.*** *For more information on SAS Program Meetings contact Kyle Moon at* programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org

GET YOUR 2021 SAS CALENDAR

Be reminded of important SAS dates and events, enjoy quotes about birds and by birders, and decorate your home or office with 12 months of stunning images of birds of the Greater Yellowstone eocsystem by Sacajawea Audubon Society's own Forrest Roland and Kyle Moon. You can order the calendar for $25 either online at sacajaweaaudubon.org or when joining or renewing your SAC membership (*see membership form on page 11*). **Get—or gift—yours today!**

SAS JANUARY 2021 BOOK CLUB

Hey SAS Readers! Our Book Club events resume this month: Wednesday, January 20, 2021. Since we are meeting exclusively online, we have decided to change our meeting time so those who have not been able to connect in the past because of work commitments can join in on the fun!

PLEASE NOTE: We will sign on at 6:30pm and go until 7:45pm.

The book for January is "Erosion" by Terry Tempest Williams. If you are able to join us, please let Elisabeth Swanson know so she can connect you with the video platform. Her email is: elsswa@gmail.com. Her phone number is: 406-570-8325.

Stay warm. Stay well. Happy Trails. Happy Reading!

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Officers

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Field Trips, Bird Sightings	John Parker birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Hospitality	Sherry Staub hospitality@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Book Club	Sherry Staub/Elisabeth Swanson hospitality@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Newsletter Design	Amy Kelley Hoitsma aok@mcn.net
Newsletter Proofing	Marjorie Smith

SAS volunteers Paulette Epple, Matt Keefer, Colleen Moore, Frank Marchak, and Nancy Blake pull Russian Knapweed at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve. Photo by Lou Ann Harris.

FROM THE SAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR

"A Special Thank You for a Successful Year"

2020 has been a wild ride for everyone, but as we ring in the new year, it is time to reflect on the accomplishments of our dedicated members. Despite the challenges posed by COVID, we were still able to offer much of our annual programming. Ashley Martens adapted her stellar birding classes with a blend of online presentations and socially distanced outdoor field sessions. We had to cancel a few of our planned spring field trips but still ended up having nine free guided trips in our area.

On June 1st we pulled together an incredible virtual presentation on hummingbirds and held our first virtual "Annual Meeting" to elect three new board members who have been a huge asset in helping lead this organization through the myriad of challenges of 2020. Through Paulette Epple's dedicated leadership of the Conservation Committee, we coordinated the removal of 4,600 lbs of invasive Burdock from parks and trails around Bozeman. She also led the installation of a 750-square-foot "Plants for Birds Garden" at the Story Mill Community Park, featuring over 100 trees, shrubs, vines, and perennials of 35 different species. This was accomplished with the help of over 40 of you amazing volunteers.

Our dedicated volunteers continued their work monitoring and banding Mountain Bluebirds and American Kestrels via our nest box research programs.

Your Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve has provided a hope-sustaining refuge to our COVID-weary members. The restoration efforts are blazing ahead, with a 70% design being reviewed as I write this.

During the summer birdathon we rose to the social distancing challenge and were still able to engage new birders in the process, setting new records for miles walked and biked during our birdathon.

We rolled out our fall season of monthly programs on schedule via GoToWebinar and have seen phenomenal attendance and had some incredible speakers. We partnered with the Montana Native Plant Society to host author Doug Tallamy for our special Holiday Program with well over 325 people in attendance (a new record for our virtual presentations). We have also worked hard on our goals to develop new leaders in the organization and can now boast a new Programs Chair (Kyle Moon) and a new Social Media Committee led by our MSU Boardroom Bobcat Bri Daniels. We have also brought on three new board members (Vicki Saab, Mary Schlosser, and Aaron Clausen) who bring new skills, perspectives, and energy to the board. And this fall, former board member Adele Pittendrigh stepped up to co-chair our Conservation Committee.

It is hard to believe that I am halfway through my fourth year on the board for SAS and it is amazing to see all that you have accomplished in that time. I have a bright outlook for our future as an organization and I am so excited to see what we will accomplish together in the coming years.

None of the amazing work we have achieved, or hope to achieve, would be possible without our dedicated members and volunteers. Your support as members of Sacajawea Audubon Society is absolutely essential to the future of this organization and the furtherance of our mission. None of it is possible without YOU! Thank you for your unwavering support, especially through these challenging times.

Travis Wade Kidd
SAS Board of Directors Education Committee Chair

BIRD NOTES

by John Parker

So far this winter there have been few unusual birds in this corner of Montana. The one exception is the **White-winged Dove** that arrived at Kathrine and Jeff Ball's yard, near the Bozeman Public Library. They first noticed the dove in early November, and it was still there on December 19th for the Christmas Bird Count, making this White-winged Dove the latest to have occurred in Montana by over three months. This is quite possibly the same White-winged Dove that was seen in August a mile south of its present location.

In early December a **Pine Warbler** was frequenting Susan and Steve Hovde's yard in Red Lodge. This semi-hardy eastern warbler had only been documented ten previous times in Montana.

Pine Warbler by Tom Forwood.

Taking advantage of the mild early December weather, we drove to Red Lodge to see this small gem of a bird. While standing in Susan and Steve's yard I was contemplating why this bird was there. It struck me how in certain ways this yard was very similar to the yard in Bozeman that was hosting the White-winged Dove.

Both of these yards are very bird-friendly with abundant cover, food, and a nearby water source. The yard in Red Lodge has an upper canopy that is primarily coniferous with spruce and pine, while the upper canopy of the yard in Bozeman is mainly deciduous trees including cottonwood, aspen, and Russian Olive. Where characteristics of these two yards start to merge in their appeal to birds is in the variety and density of their understories. Each yard's mid-level plantings have fruit-bearing trees and shrubs that include mountain ash, chokecherry, serviceberry, and dogwood, which are ideal for frugivores such as thrushes, waxwings, and others. At their lowest level of vegetation, the attraction to birds year-round is their density of cover with thick clumps of either juniper, lilac, or Wood's Rose. And best of all from a bird's perspective are the un-manicured edges and corners with uncut native and introduced herbaceous plants and grasses providing both cover and seeds for forage. Such unmanaged areas are especially attractive to sparrows and finches.

As the name suggests, Pine Warblers are pine obligates during the breeding and nesting season, but their diet is probably the most varied of any warbler. The Pine Warbler in Red Lodge has been observed eating seeds, fruit, and particularly suet. Beside the foods eaten from the feeders, it also gleans insects in the pine bark and needles and spends a fair amount of time foraging with the juncos in the leaf litter below the trees and shrubs. This warbler has found a smorgasbord of a yard.

A bird moving through these neighborhoods will instantly recognize these yards as small oases. Importantly, these winter microsites are extremely appealing to our more common birds like woodpeckers, chickadees, and juncos.

No matter whether your yard is newer or older with limited plantings and a manicured lawn, with some effort and a few short years you could have your very own "sparrow spot" or even the neighborhood "hotspot." While you may never have a White-winged Dove or Pine Warbler in your yard, you can provide refuge for common birds and maybe even host an over wintering White-throated Sparrow or Harris's Sparrow.

For more information about creating a visually appealing and bird friendly yard, see "Landscaping for Birds" on the Sacajawea website.

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE UPDATE: JAN. 2021

JOIN US IN CREATING THIS WETLAND OASIS

by Chris Nixon, SAS President

Good news! Your support is returning a wetland oasis to our semi-arid environs here in Bozeman. Progress has continued to move forward on the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP). Rich McEldowney and staff with Confluence Inc. have drafted the 70% design documents showing much greater detail of surface elevation changes that will be made to provide greater diversity in wetland habitat types on the preserve. The ultimate goal is to support greater species diversity and enhanced wetland services to the watershed.

The old sewer line that runs under the area has been abandoned and properly plugged to prevent it from draining the water from the area. The new sewer mainline was installed along the base of the bluff along the south of the preserve. A 12-foot-wide all-weather access will be maintained for necessary sewer maintenance by City of Bozeman personnel and service vehicles. It will not serve as a vehicle access for the public. Rather, in the future—after appropriate native wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs have been planted and established—this access will double as the public trail for a more intimate experience of the wetland. This of course will pose its own challenges as we all have to balance our enjoyment of the wetland without allowing ourselves and our canine friends to disturb wildlife and critical rare habitats they need for their ability to thrive.

SAS Board member Forrest Rowland and his brother Isaac Rowland installed temporary snow fencing and signage in hopes of preventing the compaction of soils in the sewer cut through the alder woodland on the northwest side of the railroad berm. We will have to heavily monitor this impacted area in the spring and coming growing seasons to prevent weed establishment and to favor natural revegetation of the impacted strip. So all of you burdock bandits and weed warriors will have job security—or rather, volunteer security—into the future. Your assistance will be greatly needed.

We are not only focusing on wetland protection within the boundaries of the IAWP. The SAS Board, SAS members, and other local organizations have been busy lobbying and informing city and county officials on the importance of wetlands within our immediate watershed and encouraging officials to take stronger measures to make certain these important wetland benefits are not lost. The benefits these wetlands provide are vital to our well being right here at home in our communities. Impacts to our wetlands and the benefits our wetlands provide should not be mitigated in a distant valley. They are needed right here at home.

Please take time to renew your SAS membership (or join) and be part of this grand adventure.

Photo by Chris Nixon.

WHY I AM A MEMBER OF SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

My wife Gayla and I lived on a 40-acre farm in Sherwood, Oregon where we raised blueberries and horses. That farm had a four-acre pond and a little creek running through it, so we had a lot of bird species spending time on our property. I joined Portland Audubon when I became interested in identifying the bird species that were seasonally on our property. We then became involved in the Prescott Bluebird Recovery Project, which monitors hundreds of bluebird boxes in the Portland area.

My son Brandon and his family live in Bozeman and we moved here in 2013 to be near our grandkids. Brandon is the worship pastor at Journey Church. I began going on some Sacajawea Audubon Society field trips and joined SAS in 2014.

I think the two main reasons that I like SAS are the incredibly personable board members and the amazingly cool conservation and education projects that we are doing. Everyone on the SAS board is very active in our projects and dedicates a significant amount of their time and energy to the success of our mission. Our conservation projects have become very personal to me. As I have gotten older I have become even more convinced that our generation has a responsibility to do our best to counteract all the damage we have done to our

planet. We caused the damage and we must do the best we can to undo it. I am especially interested in the positive effects that SAS can have on preserving and enhancing the wetlands and riparian areas in Gallatin County through our lobbying efforts on the Gallatin County Growth Plan and the Triangle Plan.

John E. Edwards
SAS Board Member

I've always liked birds. But when I moved to Montana from Illinois in fall of 2013, I wasn't a birder. I was a skier, and I happened to check out Bridger Bowl during Raptorfest. Seeing Golden Eagles migrate was mind-blowing—still is. Then in late spring, I was exploring Headwaters State Park when I ran into Lou Ann Harris, looking at baby owls in the cliffs above the Missouri through a spotting scope. She was scouting for a field trip she was to be leading for the Montana Audubon Bird Festival, which was taking place in Bozeman. After sharing her view of the owls, she encouraged me to attend the festival, and I did. What a welcoming bunch! I started going on field trips and to meetings, doing bird counts, taking classes, visiting the Bridger hawk watch site, helping with events, and in so doing, making lifelong friends—human and feathered. My world has expanded in so many ways as a result, and the modest membership fee is but a small price to pay.

Aside from the camaraderie, knowledge, and fun that SAS offers me personally, an important reason I'm a member is to tangibly support all the incredible work the organization does for our environment, and for birds in particular, in our area and beyond. We do this not only through our programs, but informally as we meet new birders, birders who are new to the area, and potential birders (which is everyone else!). I'm a better ambassador with the strength of SAS behind me. I live near the Sourdough trail, and many times I encounter people who are curious about what I'm looking at through my binoculars. From there, it's so easy to invite them to come check out SAS, just as Lou Ann did with me.

Thanks to SAS I can climb up to a hawk watch site or hike a remote drainage for the chance not only to see but to better understand something special. I can also sit at home and watch the birds in my backyard for the same reasons. And I have my bird friends to share these experiences with! Each experience and encounter with a bird has been made richer through SAS.

Judy Tsiang

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION #1: RENEW SAS MEMBERSHIP

Or Gift an Annual SAS Local Membership and/or 2021 Calendar!

For 2021, we hope your top two New Year's Resolutions will be 1) commit to be a part of Sacajawea Audubon Society as we plan for the future, and 2) commit to spreading the word about what we do and who we are.

Join today, as together we approach our 54th year as an effective, local grassroots group, building on an interest in birds to promote the conservation of our natural environment through enjoyment, education, and action.

Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) encourages everyone who enjoys our field trips and monthly programs or supports our conservation work to join/renew your local chapter membership. 100% of your local membership dues **directly** support local SAS education and conservation programs.

SAS MEMBERS ARE…..

- Protecting working lands for birds and other wildlife.
- Preserving and protecting bird species and their habitats.
- Supporting bird-friendly communities in Montana with our bird-friendly landscape program.
- Contributing to environmental education programs for all ages and abilities on birds, wildlife, and habitat.
- Partnering with other environmental groups, citizens, and local government to protect community health.
- Advocating for environmental issues locally and regionally.

SAS MEMBERS ENJOY:

- Free monthly keynote speakers.
- Free "Birding Hotspots of Gallatin Valley,"a guide to birding around the Gallatin Valley & beyond.
- Free monthly member e-newsletter (9 per year),
- 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 with shared interests.
- Participation in many citizen science projects.
- Free guided birding field trips.

Sacajawea Audubon Society is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with its own board of directors, membership, budget, and programs. SAS membership does not include membership in the National Audubon Society, although we are a NAS chapter and fully value and support their work and advocacy. Why not become a member of both, and **join today**! Visit https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/join-sas/

~ Sacajawea Audubon Society's Board of Directors

Sacajawea Audubon Society Membership 2021

Individual or Family

☐ ***YES!*** I have included $25 for my **2021 SACAJAWEA AUDUBON CALENDAR**

☐ Basic Membership $25

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

☐ Thank You for Considering an Additional Donation .....$_____

- ☐ *Bridger Raptor Study*
- ☐ *Education*
- ☐ *Story Mill Park Bird Feeding Station*
- ☐ *Wetland Campaign*
- ☐ *Wherever Needed*

Name _____

Address _____
(Street or PO Box)

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

Phone ( )

Email _____

❖ 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 National Audubon, so your contact information is safe with us. Please check the boxes if you do not want your information shared with.... ☐ National Audubon Society

☐ ***YES!*** I have included another $20 to join National Audubon Society

Mail this form and 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 1/21

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.

Deadline for article submission is the 15th of the month preceding the month the articles will appear. Send articles electronically to 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

Plants for Birds: **Golden Currant**

- **Scientific Name:** *Ribes aureum* (Grossulariaceae family)
- **Height:** 4 to 7 ft.
- **Hardiness:** Zone 2
- **Wildlife Value:** Flowers attract hummingbirds and other pollinators. Berries provide food for birds and small mammals.

Golden Currant flowers and fruit. Photos by Al Schneider.

Golden Currant is a valuable native shrub of Montana that fits wonderfully in a bird-friendly garden. It provides a variety of color from summer to fall ranging from attractive yellow flowers in spring, to orange, red, or black berries in late summer and deep purple leaves in fall. It is one of our earliest blooming shrubs in Montana and hummingbirds seek it out when they first arrive in May. Watch for calliope hummingbirds near the shrubs when they are blooming. The berries provide an abundant food source for small mammals and a variety of birds including catbirds, robins, and waxwings.

Golden Currant grows throughout Montana and can be found growing in foothill thickets, riparian zones, montane meadows, grasslands, sage brush areas, and openings of coniferous forests.

Ribes aureum has both cultural and historical importance in Montana. Lewis and Clark described and collected specimens of this plant in the early 1800s and it's the only known species collected from Montana to have survived the expedition. Sacajawea mentioned the plant to Lewis and Clark saying it was abundant throughout the Rocky Mountains and eaten and used by Native Americans. Many tribes used the fruit both fresh and dried, often mixing it in pemmican. Some tribes used several parts of the plant for medicinal purposes. Today the berries are used in jellies, sauces, and pies, plus the flowers are edible, too.

Golden Currant can grow up to 7' high and 7' wide. Its foliage creates a delicate look in the landscape. It flowers from May to June producing tubular yellow flowers that hang in clusters. It's adaptable to both dry and moist locations, is drought tolerant, and needs little maintenance and pruning. It grows well in sunny or semi-shady sites and works well for mass plantings, mixed bio-hedges and for general garden use. Consider fencing young plants from deer if necessary until the plants get big enough to withstand some browsing.

A lovely native shrub, this is a winner for attracting birds of all kinds to your yard! *~ Leslie Eddington*