APRIL 2022

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.

Monday, April 11th, 2022 Monthly Program:

"Migration and Movement of Montana's Nongame Wildlife" *with Allison Begley, Avian Conservation Biologist, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks*

Allison Begley

Managing nearly 500 nongame species and their habitats—including 15 species of bats and over 400 birds—is the responsibility of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. All of these species move across the landscape at varying scales and use a range of habitat types in Montana throughout the year. Many species move between states, countries, and even continents. One of the Nongame Wildlife Program's fundamental objectives is to conserve, restore, and enhance habitat for nongame wildlife. To address this objective, a better understanding of migration and movement of these species is needed to prioritize habitats for protection, acquisition, or restoration.

Join us as Avian Conservation Biologist Allison Begley introduces us to revolutionizing ways researchers study migration, habitat use, and other movement of Montana's wildlife. With a focus on grassland birds, she will address how several partners within the Montana Bird Conservation Partnership have established Motus Wildlife Tracking System stations to help answer local and flyway-wide questions regarding migration and movement of birds and bats.

Tracking long-range movements of small-bodied animals has always been challenging but new miniaturized radio transmitters that weigh as little as 0.15g are revolutionizing the way researchers study migration, habitat use, and other movement-related questions. The Motus Wildlife Tracking System is an international collaborative network of researchers that use automated radio telemetry to simultaneously track hundreds of individuals of numerous species of birds, bats, and insects. The main restriction is that these transmitters can only be tracked where receivers exist. The solution is a collaborative approach to radio telemetry.

Allison Begley has been with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks since 2003 and has worked on nongame wildlife throughout her tenure. Currently, she lives and works in Helena with her husband, daughter, son, and very big dog. When she's not driving kids to gymnastics or hockey, she likes to downhill ski or kayak.

The in-person meeting on April 11th will be held at Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf (off S. 19th). A social begins at 6:30PM; the program begins at 7:00PM. We are following Gallatin County Health Department Guidelines; **masks are recommended.** Watch for an email in the event we have to cancel the in-person meeting. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own mug.

For virtual attendance, please register for the April 11th SAS Monthly Program Meeting at: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7934449062201053198 After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Attendees—whether in person or virtual—are encouraged to share their bird sightings at this and every monthly program.

SAS programs are free and open to the public, featuring a special guest speaker the 2nd Monday of each month, September through May. For more information, contact Kyle Moon at programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

Chestnut-collared Longspur photo by Bob Martinka.

WANTED: SAS BOARD MEMBERS

If you love Sacajawea Audubon Society's mission, then you might love to serve on the SAS Board!

A HUGE THANK YOU to outgoing SAS Board Member **Forrest Rowland** for his dedication and his kind words:

It has been a true pleasure and honor to serve with members of the board and other organizations these past years. What has been built, and continues to grow, is very impressive. I'm proud to have been with SAS on that journey, and reluctant to let go, though I must.

I look forward to hearing about SAS's continued successes, and seeing the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve as a reality. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be part of this! It's an amazing community at SAS, and I'll do my best to continue to get more folks from the Livingston side of the pass involved.

Warmest Regards and Best Wishes, Forrest Rowland

Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) is accepting applications from individuals interested in serving on the Board of Directors! We have one vacant position and two newly created positions on the Board, and would be interested in discussing responsibilities with anyone interested in serving.

This is an excellent opportunity for SAS to bring new expertise and perspective into the Board of Directors. Applications are available upon request.

To inquire, please contact Aaron Clausen, SAS Nominations Committee Chair, at: aaronclausen@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

Gallatin Valley Earth Day Events

April 6 at 7PM: Online presentation by one of Montana's leading sustainability experts, Randy Hafer. ***Gallatin Valley 2022: Grape or Raisin? The coming water shortage and how to respond to it.***

April 13 at 7PM: Online film screening of ***Drop—Water Connects Us All*** plus Q & A and discussion with Hilary Hutcheson, Hilary Lindh, and David Brooks.

April 22 at 7PM: ***"Water for the Earth"*** celebration at the Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture. Social at 6PM.

April 23, 10AM–3PM: Festival at The Emerson Center with activities and exhibits. Stop by the Sacajawea Audubon Society table to learn about bird-friendly landscaping, birding hotspots, and the IAWP Busy Beavers. Don't miss the presentation about the IAWP.

More information and registration for virtual events at: https://www.gallatinvalleyearthday.org/.

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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President	Chris Nixon pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Vice President	John Edwards vicepres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Loreene Reid	loreener@sacajaweaaudubon.org

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Field Trips, Bird Sightings	John Parker birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Hospitality	**Looking for Volunteer** hospitality@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Membership	Loreene Reid membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Newsletter	Terri Narotzky newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Wetlands Preservation	Loreene Reid wetlands@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Book Club	Elisabeth Swanson & Hilary Johnson elsswa@gmail.com | ralphhilary@gmail.com
Big Sky Watershed/ AmeriCorp Member	Oakley Strausser oakleystrausser@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Newsletter Design	Amy Kelley Hoitsma aok@mcn.net

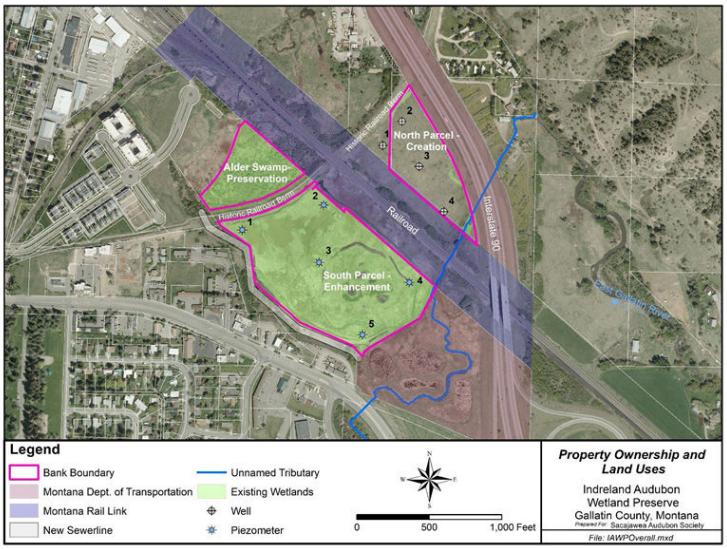
SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE

UPDATE: APRIL 2022

Hydrology of the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve

Article, map, and graphics by Rich McEldowney



The primary source of hydrology at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve is shallow groundwater contributions from the south and southeast. Preliminary investigations suggest that the groundwater expressed on the site originates from two sources—the East Gallatin River alluvial aquifer, and from the Gallatin Range, flowing under the Bozeman Fluviatile until it is intercepted by the East Gallatin River in this part of the valley (Hackett et al. 1960).

To better assess the site's hydrologic conditions, groundwater elevations were measured in 2020 and 2021 at groundwater wells on the north parcel and in 2021 with piezometer devices on the south parcel *(Figure 6, Appendix A)*. Data was collected at five piezometer devices between April and October 2021, and four groundwater wells between May 2020 and October 2021. Piezometers were installed on the south parcel instead of groundwater wells in order to better understand artesian pressures of the system, groundwater hydraulic gradients, and the aquifer's ability to fill and maintain pond levels at design pool elevations through the growing season.

Depth to groundwater over the monitoring period for the north parcel is shown on Figure 2. Groundwater levels for the north parcel were generally highest in May and early June in 2020 and 2021, ranging from 5 to 32 inches below ground surface *(Figure 2, on page 4)* and declined throughout the summer and fall months.

continued on page 4

IAWP BUSY BEAVERS GEARING UP FOR SPRING PROJECTS

By Heather Priest

The IAWP Busy Beavers are gearing up for Spring! On **April 4th**, from **1:00–3:00PM**, a **groundwater monitoring training** will be held at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve. IAWP Busy Beavers will be trained on collecting important data from piezometers and wells within the wetland that will help influence the IAWP's restoration/enhancement process. The groundwater sampling season will take place weekly on Mondays at 10:00AM from April to September. If you are interested in collecting groundwater data, please reach out to heather@gallatinwatershedcouncil.org.

The first general training for IAWP Busy Beavers will take place on **Saturday, April 16th** from **10–11:30AM** at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve for both existing and new volunteers. Additionally, Spring will be kicking off a variety of events such as dog waste cleanups, watershed cleanups, avian point counts, and more.

Stay up to date with these opportunities by filling out an IAWP Busy Beavers application at www.gallatinwatershedcouncil.org/volunteer.

For more information visit bozemanwetlands.org

Photo inset: IAWP Busy Beaver Michael Smith collects data from a piezometer at the IAWP during the 2021 sampling season. Photo by Heather Priest.

Hydrology of the IAWP *continued from page 3*

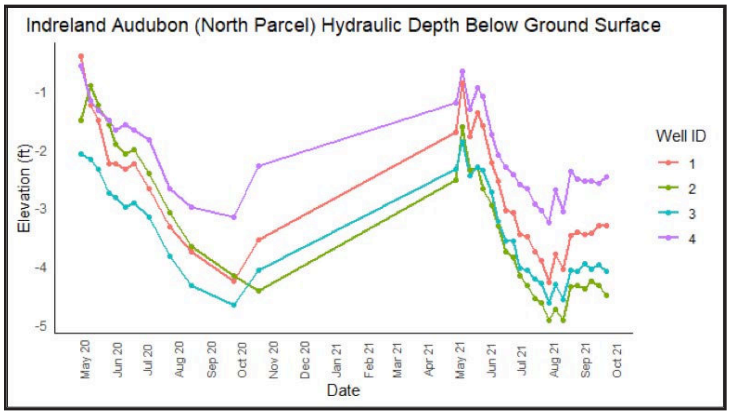
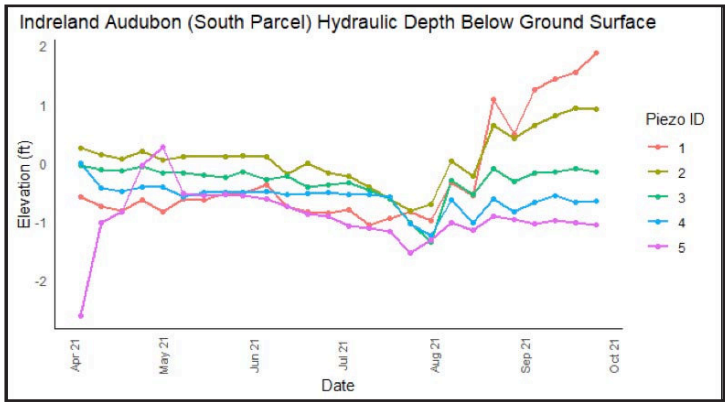


Figure 2. 2020 and 2021 groundwater levels, measured at four groundwater wells within the IAWP north parcel.[1]

Figure 3 shows the piezometer monitoring results for the south parcel. In this parcel, water levels were relatively constant for all piezometers for the early part of the summer, and then dipped at the end of July/beginning of August. Water levels in piezometers 1 and 2 were much higher in late August through October 2021, ranging from 12 inches below to 21 inches above the ground surface. This increase is directly related to the occurrence of beaver on the site and their blocking of the outlet culvert. Water levels in piezometer 3 also increased slightly, and was also likely influenced by the beaver activity. Piezometers 4 and 5 occur further from the outlet culvert and appear to have recovered to their early summer levels once irrigation pumping stopped at the end of August/beginning of September.

Figure 3. 2021 groundwater and surface water levels, measured at five piezometer devices within the IAWP south parcel.[2]



Footnotes

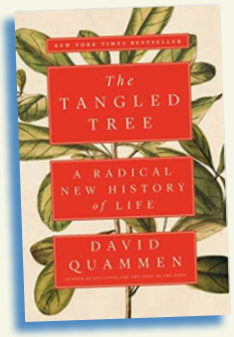
<1> Wells were not continuously monitored. Lines connecting the dots are included to help show general trends in the groundwater data and are not intended to imply actual depths to groundwater.

<2> Piezometer devices were not continuously monitored. Lines connecting the dots are included to help show general trends in the groundwater/surface water data and are not intended to imply actual depths to groundwater.

Rich McEldowney is with Confluence Consulting, Inc., which is partnering with SAS to design the restoration and enhancement of the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve.

April 2022 Book Club Update

This month, we will discuss ***The Tangled Tree: A Radical New History of Life*** (2018) by David Quammen, a Bozeman resident since 1973 and award-winning natural history writer. Quammen's writing started inauspiciously with two spy novels, including one published by Doubleday in 1973 that "sank like a hot pistol tossed into the Potomac," causing the author to try nonfiction instead.



In ***Tangled Tree***, Quammen describes how pioneering scientists in the field of molecular biology transformed our understanding of evolution, and the implications for human health and modern medicine. Quammen introduces readers to these trailblazing scientists and their work in the lab, the field, and sometimes over a beer.

A key departure from Charles Darwin's understanding of inheritance began as scientists questioned the traditional model of a "tree of life," with species branching out and developing separately. In the 1970s, genes were discovered to not always flow from parent to child, but sometimes horizontally from one species to another. The mechanism for this is retroviruses that invade our DNA. According to Quammen, about 8% of the genes in our bodies are not from our ancestors, but from retroviral infection from other species. One of these viral insertions happily resulted in the human placenta. Fear not, as one reviewer wrote in the *New York Times*: "David Quammen turns hard science into page-turning pleasure."

Please join us virtually as we discuss this book on **April 20th** from **6:30–7:45PM**. The book is available in hardback, paperback, audiobook or e-books, and for as little as $2.04 on eBay!

In order to join on your computer or tablet, go to https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/604063133 (first-timers please sign in early to download the app). You can also call in at 872-240- 3212. Use Meeting ID number 604-063-133.

To get help, please contact Elisabeth at 406-570-8325 or elsswa@gmail.com or Loreene at 406-600-6666. Share your suggestions for new titles for the Fall book club with Elisabeth or Hilary (gralphhilary@gmail.com) by May 6th.

BIRD NOTES

by John Parker

As mentioned last month, the first **Mountain Bluebirds** are expected to arrive in early March. Right on schedule, the first reported bluebirds in this area were the two Mountain Bluebirds seen south of Emigrant by Jeff Reed on March 4th.

Unreported in last month's sightings article were the 11 **Sandhill Cranes** seen February 1st near Point of Rocks in Paradise Valley, by Annalise Kaylor and Jared Lloyd. This was truly an exceptional sighting for both the date and number of cranes. There are only a handful of Sandhill Crane records for Montana between mid-January and mid-February, and all of the previous observations during this period were of single birds.

Say's Phoebe photo by Ed Harper.

This area's first February record for **Say's Phoebe** was established on the 27th, by Andy Boyce—a full month ahead of the expected first arrival date. The phoebe was seen in Paradise Valley as it was investigating possible nesting locations in the rafters of the Chico Lodge.

During the early morning hours of February 26th, Audrey Evers heard a **Northern Pygmy Owl** calling from the cottonwoods near her Four Corners home.

Locally, the nesting season has already begun for a number of bird species, most notably **owls**. Owls are such engaging birds for any number of reasons, so people find them irresistible. This appealing nature draws people to owls, sometimes leading to behaviors that are harmful to the birds' feeding habits, ability to breed successfully, and even their very survival. This topic came to mind because recently I became aware of another egregious example of unthinking behavior around owls. In this case the person involved was using playback for multiple species of owls at several locations.

American Birding Association Principles of Birding Ethics (excerpt)

"Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment, and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first."

With the rapidly increasing number of people residing in and visiting southwestern Montana, the pressure on owls and other birds is greater by the day. Whether you want to see, hear, or photograph birds, think about the first rule of birding and ask: Am I affecting the behavior of the bird? One very good site covering how to behave around owls is on the **International Owl Center** website under the heading "Owls and You." Visit https://www.internationalowlcenter.org/respectful_observation.html

Another informative website is the Colorado Parks and Wildlife section on "Raptor-Buffer-Guidelines." Visit https://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/WildlifeSpecies/LivingWithWildlife/Raptor-Buffer-Guidelines.pdf

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the evolution of social media, and how it can affect our interaction with birds. It's always been the case that we want to share our sightings with others. But the combination of increasing numbers of people and the speed of communications, in some cases, is having a profound effect on the way we bird and our expectations (see eBird, Facebook, etc.). Perhaps it's worth considering whether you should even share the whereabouts of potentially easily disturbed birds. Another strategy to spare an owl undue pressure is to delay entering the bird into eBird or Facebook for a week or two, and of course, there is an option to hide your list on eBird. Also avoid giving the specific locations of nesting and roosting sites. For a good general source for birding ethics use the **American Birding Association Birding Code of Ethics** (https://www.aba.org/aba-code-of-birding-ethics/).

So, get out this Spring and enjoy looking for birds. But also, be sure to look out for the birds' welfare and safety from disturbance.

2022 SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY 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 is there in the first place? To help you answer all of these questions and more, Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) is offering a **BEGINNING BIRDING WORKSHOP** and **INTERMEDIATE BIRDING SHORT COURSES**.

NEW THIS YEAR, we are offering **two sections** of the **DEEP NATURE CONNECTION** series. We will explore routines to develop a deeper understanding of and connection to wild nature and natural cycles as we learn about edible and medicinal plants, animal tracking, bird language, and the many ways that nature teaches us.

All courses will be taught by **Ashley Martens, M.S.**, an experienced birder, naturalist, and outdoor educator. 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.**

Red-breasted Nuthatch photo by Terri Narotzky.

BEGINNING BIRDING IN FOREST AND FIELD WORKSHOP

Participants will be introduced to the basics of birding through three evening classroom sessions and three 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 three sections of this course this year:

- Section A will have field trips on Friday mornings.
- Section B will have field trips on Saturday mornings.
- Section C will have field trips on Sunday mornings.

Sections A, B and C will meet together for classroom sessions.

CLASSROOM SESSIONS

Sections A, B & C: Wednesday evenings—May 11, June 1, and June 15—6:00–7:30PM at the Wild Birds Unlimited store on 19th Street.

FIELD TRIPS

Section A: Friday mornings—May 13, June 3, and June 17—from 7 to 10AM at various locations

Section B: Saturday mornings—May 14, June 4, and June 18—from 7 to 10AM at various locations

Section C: Sunday mornings—May 15, June 5, and June 19—from 7 to 10AM at various locations

Cost: $95 for SAS members; $115 for non-members. 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: Wednesday, April 27th, 6–7:30PM at Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trip: Saturday, April 30th, 7–10AM (location TBA)

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2022 SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY BIRDING WORKSHOPS

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 five 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: Wednesday, May 18th, 6–7:30PM at Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trip: Saturday, May 21st, 7–10AM (location TBA)

WARBLERS

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

Classroom Session: Wednesday, June 8th, 6–7:30PM at Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trip: Saturday, June 11th, 7–10AM (location TBA)

SPARROWS & ALLIES

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

White-crowned Sparrow photo by Terri Narotsky.

Classroom Session: Wednesday, June 22nd, 6–7:30PM at Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trip: Saturday, June 25th, 7–10AM (location TBA)

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 learn 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 Western Tanager.

Classroom Session: Wednesday, June 29th, 6–7:30PM at Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trip: Friday, July 1st, 7–10AM (location TBA)

Cost per short course: $45 for SAS members; $55 for non-members. Maximum 8 students. Supply lists will be provided upon registration.

DEEP NATURE CONNECTION SERIES

For six weeks, we will gather and practice routines to develop a deeper understanding of and connection to wild nature and natural cycles. We will investigate nature through mindfulness practices, play, observation, and inspiring instructions. We will learn about edible and medicinal plants (and even make some tea and/or tinctures), animal tracking, bird language, and the many ways that nature teaches us.

FIELD SESSION A: Wednesday mornings, 9–11AM, May 18 & 25 and June 1,8,15 & 22

FIELD SESSION B: Tuesday evenings, 6–8PM, May 17, 24 & 31 and June 7, 14 & 21

- Week 1 – Observing & Sit Spot
- Week 2 – Wandering & Edible/Medicinal Plants
- Week 3 – Seeing & Animal Tracking
- Week 4 – Listening & Bird Language
- Week 5 – Connecting with Natural Cycles
- Week 6 – Bundling it All Together

Course Materials: Blank journal and writing utensils for recording/sketching thoughts and observations, bag or backpack for collecting, field guides, and binoculars if you have them.

Cost: $120 for the entire series. Maximum 9 students. Near-town location TBA.

SPONSOR A KESTREL NESTING BOX IN 2022!

Here is your chance to sponsor a kestrel nest box and learn more about our smallest falcon. This is a fun way to support Sacajawea Audubon Society's kestrel project as well as our other many conservation projects.

Female kestrel delivering a grasshopper to the chicks. Photo by Steve Jorgenson.

Sponsorship costs $50 per year per box and you can sponsor as many boxes as you like. Once you have signed up, we will assign you a box number and as the kestrel nesting season begins, you will periodically receive emailed updates, photos, and stories from the field. At the end of the season, we will send out a complete list of all the boxes, including their sponsor's name and information on nesting activity, hatching, and nestling success.

A kestrel box sponsorship makes a great eco-friendly gift or you can sponsor a kestrel box in memory of a loved one. The money raised will fund the expenses of maintaining the kestrel program as well as Sacajawea Audubon Society's other conservation projects such as Bird-friendly Landscaping, Bird Safe Windows, Golden Eagle research, and numerous bird surveys.

We hope you will consider sponsoring one or more boxes at $50 each by filling out the form below and sending a check to:

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

Make sure you send us your email address and write **"Kestrel Boxes"** on the check to help us keep track of sponsorships. You can also sign up for a kestrel box sponsorship by donating online at: https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/sponsor-a-kestrel-nest-box

A 22-day-old nestling waits for banding. Photo by Sam Koenen.

KESTREL BOX SPONSORSHIP 2022

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

EMAIL: _____

BOXES SPONSORED: _____ AMOUNT ENCLOSED (at $50 per box): _____

THIS SPONSORSHIP IS IN MEMORY OF: _____

THIS SPONSORSHIP IS IN HONOR OF: _____

PLEASE NOTIFY THE HONOREE AT (address or email): _____

_____

Mail this form with your check to: **Sacajawea Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 59771. THANK YOU!**

IT'S TIME TO CALL YOUR FAVORITE BIRDERS AND REGISTER YOUR BIRDATHON TEAM

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON 2022 BIRDATHON: SATURDAY MAY 14–TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2022

How does a Birdathon Work?

A Birdathon is similar to a walk-a-thon, but instead of collecting pledges per mile walked, you spend a great spring day outdoors with fellow birders, scanning skies, trees, shrubs, fields and water—even your backyard feeder—for birds. The challenge is to identify as many bird species as possible within a 24-hour period. You collect pledges per bird species and the money raised benefits Southwestern Montana birds and other wildlife.

To add to the fun, by participating you could win prizes and awards. Check-out the Birdathon Dates, Rules, and Award & Prizes information sheets in the **Birdathon Kit** you can find online at www.sacajaweaaudubon.org or call 406-600-6666.

Birding at the Peregrine Trail. Photo by Loreene Reid.

How Can You Participate in the Birdathon?

Participation is easy: You don't have to be an expert. Some people do Birdathons by counting the visitors to their feeder. Others cover dozens of miles in a day, racking up over 100 species. The key to Birdathon is to have fun!

JOIN A TEAM

Contact the Birdathon Committee; there are Birdathon teams that would love for you to join them. Even if you can't tell a goose from a grouse, we can teach you how. We also have celebrity birder teams.

FORM A TEAM

Get a few of your birding friends together and schedule a 24-hour period to go birding. Contact us for a Birdathon Kit and register your team (see registration form for details).

SAS volunteers at the Peregrine Trail. Photo by Loreene Reid.

TAKE A BUSINESS "BIRD BREAK"

Trade in your briefcase for binoculars, grab co-workers and count birds on your lunch hour! Contact us for more information on getting your business involved in the Sacajawea Audubon Society Birdathon—becoming an event sponsor, creating a company team, or specific levels and benefits of event sponsorship.

BE A BACKYARD BIRDER

Gather pledges and watch birds in your neighborhood park or at your own backyard feeder.

SPONSOR A TEAM MEMBER

Support your favorite team—or teams—by pledging.

SPONSOR A YOUTH TEAM

Support a group of young birders as an adult birder mentors them on a 6-hour or 24-hour Birdathon. Recommended donation for a youth team is $50 or more.

The Birdathon Committee has maps, field guides, fundraising tips, and plenty of experience to share. Contact us at sacajaweaaudubon.org or call 406-600-6666.

2022 Birdathon Key Dates

May 14	First Day of Birdathon
June 28	Last Day of Birdathon
June 29	Team Reports and Pledge Forms Due
June 30	Birdathon Award & Celebration Party at Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP)

Check out our website for info on awards and prizes. It's the most fun you'll ever have helping to protect Southwest Montana's birds & other wildlife!

Mary Geis—An Extraordinary Woman (1925-2022)

We were saddened by the news that longtime Sacajawea Audubon Society member Mary Geis recently passed away. It's not often that a woman like Mary comes along who dedicated her life to learning and teaching others about natural history. Many of us who were BWAGs (Bozeman Women's Activity Group) were treated to her extensive knowledge of birds, flowers, and animal tracks while on summer hikes.

Mary was a trailblazing woman in the male-dominated field of biology. She attended the Yosemite School of Field Natural History in the late 1940s, and later received her graduate degree from the University of Montana. She settled in Bozeman with her husband, Tony, teaching at a public school.

She was a tireless volunteer for Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS), starting in the early 1960s when she participated in area **Christmas Bird Counts**. It was then that she met SAS founder Louis Moos, who had started the **Bluebird Trail Project** in 1969, and was a keen bird bander. Mary had a natural curiosity about bluebirds in the Gallatin Valley and started her own bluebird trail near her home in Kelly Canyon. It began with twelve nest boxes that grew to almost 200 by 1980. Mary began banding bluebirds, swallows, chickadees, and wrens under Louis and received her own banding permit a couple of years later.

Mountain Bluebird photo by Terri Narotsky.

Mary Geis and Lou Ann Harris in 2007 on the Rocky Mountain Road bluebird trail. Photo by Diane Gresham.

Mary loved crunching numbers, creating charts that tracked bluebird, swallow, wren, and chickadee nesting statistics. Using her nesting data one year, she concluded that local tree swallows consumed 1,000 pounds of insects each summer. Each nest record she collected was carefully written down and sent in to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. According to Cornell, Mary submitted nearly 1,500 Mountain Bluebird records during a 30-year span. This, combined with the nesting data from Louis Moos and Lou Ann Harris, spans more than 50 years and is the richest dataset in one location for any bluebird species in North America.

Mary served as the coordinator of the SAS Bluebird Trail Project until 2009. She taught many of us how to handle and band the tiny bluebird and swallow nestlings, and how to catch the females in the box. It seemed a daunting task to us neophytes, but she taught with a steady hand and assuring voice.

In addition to participating in yearly Christmas Bird Counts, Mary was a field trip leader and a member of the **SAS Board of Directors**. She also taught natural history to chapter members.

We will continue to honor Mary's work by maintaining and monitoring the many bluebird boxes that chapter members have installed through the years, and also continue to educate the public about how important and special wild birds are in our world.

~ Lou Ann Harris

Coming in May 2022 . . .

May 5-6: Give Big Gallatin Valley

Again this year, donations to Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) through **Give Big Gallatin Valley** will go toward restoration of the **Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve**. See next month's SAS newsletter for more details. Imagine how your gift can contribute to this Big SAS project!

May 9: Sacajawea Audubon Society Annual Meeting and Board Elections

May 14: "Dim the Lights for Birds at Night!"

The theme for **World Migratory Bird Day** (WMBD) this year focuses on **light pollution**. A significant threat to migratory birds, light pollution causes disorientation when they fly at night, leading to collisions with buildings, interfering with their internal clocks, or interfering with their ability to undertake long-distance migrations.

Sacajawea Audubon Society will celebrate WMBD—May 14—in a new format this year. Check out the SAS Facebook page and website (sacajaweaaudubon.org) for more information.

May 18: "Raven Rendezvous—Exploring Connections Among the Trickster, Wolves, and People"

How do Yellowstone's ravens make a living from the work of wolves and humans? Dr. John Marzluff, Ridgeway Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington, will describe how his tagging and tracking of these smart, opportunistic birds is helping refine our understanding of the interactions of ravens with both wolves and people in the Greater Yellowstone region.

Go to www.gallatinscience.org to learn about the informative and free Science Inquiry Series from Gallatin Valley Friends of the Sciences. Use the link on the website to join.

Sacajawea Audubon Society Membership 2022

Individual or Family
January -December 2022

☐ *YES!* I have included $25 for my 2022 SACAJAWEA AUDUBON CALENDAR

☐ Basic Membership $25

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

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

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

Name _____

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

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☐ *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!

4/22 Newsletter

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's 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

Spring Birding at Ennis Lake

A sure cure for spring fever is lots of early spring birds. The primary focus of this trip will be migrating waterfowl. At this time of year, the ducks will be at their dazzling best in full breeding plumage, and usually in great abundance. This trip will also provide a good opportunity for finding other early migrants such as **Sandhill Cranes**, **Tree Swallows**, and **Mountain Bluebirds**.

Be prepared for the weather, with plenty of warm layers of clothing for a day out in the elements. We will return to the museum mid- to late-afternoon, so bring a lunch and snacks. If you have a spotting scope to bring, that would be helpful. Meet at the **Museum of the Rockies parking lot** at **8AM, Saturday, April 9th**. After arranging for carpooling, we will head for Ennis Lake at 8:15AM. There is a 12-person or 4-car limit for the trip, so sign up early. **It is required for participants to be vaccinated for carpooling.** Contact **John Parker** at **(406) 586-5863** or email **birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org** to reserve a spot.

Ennis Lake photo by Lou Ann Harris.