MAY 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, May 9th, 2022, at 6:00 PM, Hope Lutheran Church:

Annual Sweet & Savory Potluck/Meeting/Elections/Program:

"Invasive Species—Our Ecosystem Legacy" with Jennifer Mohler, Gallatin Invasive Species

Jennifer Mohler

Why do invasive plants matter? Ponder this: approximately 18,000 plant species are native to North America (here pre-European contact). In the last 400 years, humans have introduced approximately 30,000 new plant species to North America.

Of those 30,000, approximately 5,000 have escaped cultivation. Of those 5,000 escapees, approximately 500 have been found to be invasive. Montana has 35 state-listed noxious weeds and regulated plants.

Since the Jamestown settlement, we have dumped THIRTY THOUSAND plant species into a continent that previously had ONLY 18,000...and those 18,000 had millennia to co-evolve with wildlife in their respective ecosystems.

The magnitude of this is a lot like the climate crisis...an unprecedented impact in a short span of time.

Invasive species, both terrestrial and aquatic, have profound impacts on our ecosystem. Invasive species decrease species diversity, diminish water quality, increase soil erosion, degrade wildlife habitat, and reduce recreational opportunities.

Yellowstone National Park identifies invasive species as the second biggest threat the park faces—after climate change.

A 2019 study found that the introduction of invasive species has been the primary cause of plant and animal extinctions over the past 500 years. This talk will cover what invasive species are, the impact they have on the ecosystem, and what you can do to protect our native ecosystems.

Jennifer Mohler is a resource conservationist and Executive Director of Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance. After receiving her B.S. degree in Botany from Colorado State University, she completed graduate classes in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences at Montana State University. For over 20 years, Jennifer has worked with a diverse group of public, private, and non-profit entities to conserve natural resources by promoting sustainable land management practices.

Clockwise from above: Invasive species Houndstongue; Milk Thistle; Oxeye Daisy.

The in-person meeting on May 9 will be held at Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf (off S. 19th). The potluck begins at 6:00 PM; **bring a sweet or savory dish to share** (plates and utensils provided—bring your own mug). The potluck will be followed by a short meeting and board elections at 7:00 PM, followed by the program. We are following Gallatin Co. Health Department Guidelines; **masks are recommended.** Watch for an email in the event we have to cancel the in-person meeting.

For virtual attendance, please register for the May 9th meeting at: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5564330802799246603. 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. Share the program on social media using the hashtags #sasbirds #sacaaudubon #invasivespecies

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.

SAVE THE DATE:
Bird-Friendly Gardens Tour
Friday, July 8, 6:30 PM

Photo courtesy of Mel Frost.

Join Sacajawea Audubon Society as we tour two lovely gardens that have been designed to attract a variety of birds and pollinators while creating inviting outdoor living spaces in a downtown Bozeman neighborhood. We will first visit the yard of Justin Runyon and Casey Delphia, where large plantings of native drought-tolerant wildflowers support a rich biodiversity of bees, butterflies, moths, and birds. Next we will tour the nearby yard of Mel Frost and Jim Madden, where beautiful plantings of bird-friendly trees, shrubs, and perennials combine to create the multi-layered habitat needed by birds. Learn about some of the best plants and techniques to attract pollinators, hummingbirds, and other birds on small urban lots where space is tight. 15-person limit and registration is required. Contact either Paulette Epple (conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org) or Vicki Saab (vickisaab@sacajaweaaudubon.org) to register and get directions.

GROW YOUR GARDEN FOR THE BIRDS!

Join Sacajawea Audubon Society for a presentation and tour of the **Bird-Friendly Demonstration Garden** at **Story Mill Community Park, Saturday, July 16, 10 AM**

- See examples of plants for birds
- Bring your landscaping questions

For more information, contact Paulette Epple at conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org. *Please park in the parking lot off of Bridger Drive.*

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE UPDATE: MAY 2022

Spring migrants and summer residents are starting to return to the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP). Large numbers of male Red-winged Blackbirds are back in force. A male Northern Harrier is making an appearance. Eight Sandhill Cranes have been spotted at the IAWP. Hopefully one or more pairs will utilize the area for nesting again this year. At any rate, birds are or will soon be making claims to nesting areas.

With the new construction project now taking place at Village Crossing, there is a resulting loss of what many people have long used as a place to exercise their dogs. So please be aware that on the IAWP, **dogs must be on a leash and only allowed on the upper railroad berm and trestle**.

American Beaver photo by Erin Poor, USGS.

Keep a lookout for the **beavers** that have built a lodge near the end of the historic railroad berm. We may soon be seeing young beavers. If so, these will be the first baby beavers seen from the berm since the wetland was drained back in 2009—even more reason to keep all dogs on leash and only on the railroad berm.

Since the beavers are active, our IAWP Busy Beavers have been out working on the beaver deceiver in further attempts to limit the extent the beavers are allowed to dam up the water at the base of the berm. If you are interested in learning about how beaver deceivers work, check out Bozemanwetlands.org for summer announcements. Sacajawea Audubon Society Board member Billy Burton will give a presentation on beaver deceivers at a yet-to-be-determined date—watch for an announcement.

Members of the Wetland Preservation Project met mid April to discuss the proposed **Wetland Mitigation Bank** at the IAWP with the Interagency Review Team. Construction of the ponds and berms at the IAWP cannot start until the wetland mitigation bank instrument has been finalized. **Questions? Contact** wetlands@sacajaweaaudubon.org

PLEASE JOIN US FOR "GIVE BIG"

Thursday, May 5th, 5:00–9:00 PM *at* Red Tractor Pizza

Join the Sacajawea Audubon Society and Gallatin Watershed Council for the **Busy Beavers Donor Lounge**: an evening of live music and fun, while raising money for the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve and the Busy Beavers Volunteer program! Learn how you can help create a wetland community that supports habitats for diverse wildlife species and help us increase educational opportunities for the community to learn about hydrology, ecology, and history. Through donations or by volunteering for the IAWP Busy Beavers, you can have a positive impact on wetland conservation in the Gallatin Valley.

Friday, May 6th, 8:00 AM

Join us on Friday morning at the IAWP to **Meet the Wild Neighbors**! Take this opportunity to experience the wetlands for yourself and see some of the local birds and wildlife who call it home. Park near Café M (777 E. Main St.) and meet the team before taking a short walk to the preserve. This is the first Bird Walk of the season at the IAWP; you can join every Friday morning at 8:00 AM starting at the M Cafe, May through June 2022 (see more information on page 4).

May 5-6, from 6 PM–6 PM

GIVE BIG Fundraising for IAWP. Show your support for this important environmental study area. In addition to (or instead of) participating in the GIVE BIG events (above), you can also contribute financially.

DONATE ONLINE:
givebiggv.org/organizations/sacajawea-audubon-society

OR MAIL YOUR CHECK TO:
Sacajawea Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1711, Bozeman MT 59771

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE UPDATE: MAY 2022

IAWP Busy Beavers Volunteer Opportunities

By Heather Priest

In the beginning of April, IAWP Busy Beavers were trained to monitor groundwater at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve. The data collected by these citizen scientists will be used to help inform construction decisions for enhancement at the wetland in upcoming months. There are still available opportunities for the 2022 sampling season—please reach out to heather@gallatinwatershedcouncil.org if you are interested!

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 21st**, as a **Spring Watershed-wide Cleanup** will be conducted from **10 AM to 12 PM** to prevent trash entering our local waterways before peak runoff. Volunteers will be distributed across multiple sites in the Gallatin Valley, and will gather at Story Mill Community Park at 12:30 PM for a post-cleanup celebration. More information can be found at https://www.gallatinwatershedcouncil.org/may-gallatin-river-clean-up; registration will be released soon.

IAWP Busy Beaver Frank Marchak trains fellow volunteers how to read the depth of water in piezometers and wells at a groundwater monitoring training on April 4th. Photo by Heather Priest.

FRIDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS AT THE IAWP

Red-winged Blackbird photo by Terri Narotzky.

Curious about the exciting wetlands preserve that Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) is restoring and enhancing? Eager to see some great birds without leaving the city? Join SAS guides for **Friday morning Bird Walks**.

Time: 8:00 -10:00 AM

Meet at Café M (777 E. Main St.) for a brief talk about the wetlands and our vision for its future. We will then take a short walk to the preserve.

Bring your binocs and your enthusiasm for birds and wetlands while we explore this special area. All birding abilities welcome; no registration needed. For more information, email wetlands@sacajaweaaudubon.org

2022 Bird Walk Dates

May 6, 2022: SPECIAL "GIVE BIG" TOUR & ACTIVITIES

May 13, 2022	June 3, 2022	June 24, 2022
May 20, 2022	June 10, 2022	
May 27, 2022	June 17, 2022	

Ruffed Grouse photo by Terri Narotzky.

A Note from SAS President Chris Nixon:
Discover the Wonderful World of eBird!

If you have been contemplating setting up an eBird account and starting to utilize eBird, there could be no better time than now.

I am a Luddite! Anyone who knows me knows that I shy away from computers and techy stuff whenever possible. But even I have gotten into the habit of grabbing my "smarter-than-me phone" with the eBird app—and my binoculars—as I head out to see what new birds have arrived in the neighborhood for the morning.

Admittedly, I resisted eBird for quite a while as I just didn't see a relationship developing between me and anything techy. But, now I have an eBird account and I'm enjoying recording the birds I see, how many of each species I'm seeing, and what they are doing.

I wish eBird had been around when I started getting into birdwatching in the early 80s. I have random checklists, notebooks, and sheets of paper with bird lists from numerous birding trips that I never did anything with. I was way too lazy to start a "life list." I just enjoyed the birds, and that was good enough for me. But I now wish that eBird had been a thing then and I would have a life list as eBird makes it easy to keep up with all those lists. It can be instant if you choose to record everything on a phone while you are birding.

I recently took the free online tutorial built into eBird to better understand how to use all the features that eBird offers. Now I am aware of many more features within eBird and realize I can even go back and add those old lists and get a pretty good representation of a life list. I won't have all the useful data with those old lists that I now record with my current list, but at least not all is lost. Those old lists unfortunately won't be as valuable to citizen science, but they will no longer be largely worthless scraps of papers. And I will have a better clue about what I have seen.

As I have been exploring new areas and entering data on the spot, I am seeing how convenient eBird really makes it. I have even taken and added a few photos to my list and now have made a couple of recordings with the Merlin app, which I can upload and connect to my list.

So, if you haven't already jumped onto the eBird wagon, I encourage you to do so! I strongly recommend taking the free tutorial and concurrent quick test. It gives you more insight and confidence on how to utilize the app. To get started, visit https://ebird.org/home.

I also encourage you to join a Birdathon team or to organize a Birdathon team for this year's annual **Sacajawea Audubon Society Birdathon** in May and June (see page 13). It is a great opportunity to enjoy birding with others while contributing to citizen science and helping raise funds for SAS projects. And it is the perfect opportunity to utilize eBird and see how fun it is. Remember to abide by the Birding Code of Ethics (https://www.aba.org/aba-code-of-birding-ethics/)

Happy birding!

Chris Nixon
President, Sacajawea Audubon Society

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, potential scholarships, and to register for all classes.**

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

Sharp-shinned Hawk photo by Terri Narotzky.

Cost: $95 for Sacajawea Audubon Society members; $115 for non-members. Maximum 8 students per section. Supply lists will be provided upon registration.

INTERMEDIATE BIRDING SHORT COURSES

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

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

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)

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2022 SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY BIRDING WORKSHOPS

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.

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)

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.

Join Us for Story Mill Community Park Bird Walks!

This spring, Sacajawea Audubon Society is partnering with the City of Bozeman to offer free guided bird walks at the **Story Mill Community Park**. Come and explore the nature sanctuary within the park, visit the viewing blind at the bird feeding station, and enjoy the many bird species that call the Story Mill area their home. **Thursdays—May 5, May 12, May 19, May 26, and June 2 from 8–9:30 AM.**

Pre-registration is required. To register, go to the City website (Bozeman.net) and click on Services | Recreation Programs | Adult Programs | Bird Walks in Story Mill Park. We will meet at the Story Mill Community Center off of Bridger Canyon Drive at 8 AM. Bring your binoculars, your eyes, and your ears for a unique birding experience.

Western Tanager photo by Lou Ann Harris.

2022 Sacajawea Audubon Society's Spring Birding Series

Participants in all trips will meet at the front parking lot of the Museum of the Rockies at 6:45 AM and depart at 7:00 AM **unless otherwise noted**. Contact the trip leader to reserve a spot and for more details about all trips. If you signed up for a trip, but are unable to attend, please notify the trip leader as others may be on a waiting list.

Field trips are limited to a certain number of participants and vehicles. Car pools will be arranged prior to the trip or at the predetermined meeting place. **Dress for the weather**; good footwear is a must as field trip conditions are not always dry. Bring any food or beverages that you will need during the course of the trips, and some of the longer trips might require that you pack a lunch. An offer to help with gas to the person driving is always appreciated but not mandatory. Please turn off your cell phones and keep unnecessary conversations to a minimum while in the field. We encourage all skill levels of birders to participate. Enjoy a good time with the birds and your fellow birders!

COVID-19 is still with us, so vaccination requirements and carpooling options will be determined by the trip leaders. **Please practice social distancing where appropriate.**

MAY 14: *HEADWATERS STATE PARK*

(1/2 day trip; easy walking)

Leader: Dave Story | **206-718-5940** | story.david.m@gmail.com

The Headwaters area includes a variety of habitats, including sage/grassland and riparian, so anything from waterfowl to sparrows can occur. One of the unique features of the Headwaters area is the limestone cliffs, which support several cliff nesting species such as Peregrine Falcons and White-throated Swifts. The park, which is situated along the Missouri River corridor, is an ideal location to observe early spring migrants. Carpooling will be arranged where possible. Meet in the northeast corner of the Target parking lot at 6:45 AM and depart at 7:00 AM. Those wishing to meet at Headwaters area please make arrangements with the trip leader. *15-person limit.*

MAY 15: *PARADISE VALLEY DRIVING TOUR*

(1/2 day trip; easy walking)

Leader: George Kelly | **406-220-0282** | gjkingfisher@gmail.com

This trip will sample several locations at the northern end of Paradise Valley, beginning with a stop at the cliffs south of Livingston to scan for Peregrine Falcons and White-throated Swifts. After winding our way along sloughs, agricultural fields, and crossing the Yellowstone River, the tour will eventually make its way to the Pine Creek campground area. With so many habitats covered on the trip, a wide variety of birds can be expected, from Sandhill Cranes to Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Meet at the Livingston Albertson's parking lot, northeast corner, at 7:30 AM for carpooling. *10-person limit.*

MAY 18: *GLEN LAKE ROTARY PARK*

(3-4 hour trip; easy walking at most 2 miles)

Leader: Travis Kidd | **989-820-0078** | magpie.chatter8@gmail.com

There are many possibilities at this local birding hotspot. Over 180 bird species have been seen in the recreation area.

Lazuli Bunting photo by Terri Narotzky.

With a pond, riparian habitat, limited grassland, and mature cottonwoods, we hope to see a good diversity of what Gallatin Valley has to offer during peak breeding season. Species may include flycatchers, Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, several warblers, Lazuli Bunting, and Black Headed Grosbeak. Meet 7:00 AM at the Glen Lake parking lot. *8-person limit.*

MAY 21: *SWEET GRASS COUNTY PRAIRIE BIRD TOUR & RANCH TO TABLE EVENT*

Full-day tour, with option for early departure.

Leader: Beth Madden | **406-224-1012** | bethmadden64@gmail.com

Note: $25/person to cover ranch event and meal.

Celebrate our prairie birds with a special event this year. We will follow an approximately 40-mile driving route through prairie and agricultural landscapes north of Big Timber, with an optional 45-minute walk on some prairie lands. Past trips have yielded curlews, cranes, raptors, and prairie songbirds from bobolinks to longspurs. For some added fun we have been invited to visit the Crazy D Ranch and learn about conservation ranching and prairie birds. For our lunch hour, land and livestock managers Hilary Zaranek and Andrew Andersen will share their strategic ranching practices, which are aimed at improving ecosystem health and biodiversity on ranch lands.

A simple and delicious meal will be provided by the ranch, and offer an opportunity to enjoy beef harvested from the ranch, as well as fresh spring produce from other local farms. We will be sure to have vegetarian options. Cost is $25/person, payable by check or Venmo upon registration. Meet in Big Timber (63 miles

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east of Bozeman on Interstate 90) at the Town Pump, located at I-90 Exit 367, at 8:00 AM. *15-person limit.*

MAY 22: *MOUNT ELLIS*

(4–5 hour trip; moderately strenuous walking 3 miles)

Leader: Martha Collins | **406-579-0506** | marthacoll@msn.com

This slow-paced hike of approximately 3 miles will explore a number of habitats on State and Forest Service lands, including grassland, aspen meadow, and conifer forest edge. At this time of year many of the nesting birds—such as Calliope Hummingbirds, Red-naped Sapsuckers, Dusky Flycatchers, Orange-crowned Warblers, and a wide variety of sparrows—will have arrived on their territories. Along with terrific views of the Gallatin Valley, the wildflowers on this walk will likely distract you from the diversity of birds. *8-person limit.*

MAY 24: *SOURDOUGH NATURE TRAIL*

(3-4 hours; easy walking)

Leader: Travis Kidd | **989-820-0078** | magpie.chatter8@gmail.com

Enjoy a weekday morning stroll following Sourdough Creek during the peak of migration and early breeding season. We should see and hear a wide variety of flycatchers, thrushes and warblers. During this time of the migration there are often some surprises! Some of the neotropical birds nesting here are Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, and Black-headed Grosbeak. *8-person limit.*

MAY 28: *GLEN LAKE ROTARY PARK*

(3-4 hour trip; easy walking at most 2 miles)

Leader: Brian Thorpe | **406-581-8544** | thorpe_22@hotmail.com

There are many possibilities at this local birding hotspot. Over 180 bird species have been seen in the recreation area. With a pond, riparian habitat, limited grassland, and mature cottonwoods we hope to see good diversity of what Gallatin Valley has to offer during peak breeding season. Species may include flycatchers, Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, several warblers, Lazuli Bunting, and Black Headed Grosbeak. Meet at 7:00 AM at the Glen Lake parking lot. *8-person limit.*

MAY 29: *MOUNT ELLIS*

(4–5 hour trip; moderately strenuous walking 3 miles)

Leader: Don Profota | **406-579-3200** | dprofota@gmail.com

This slow-paced hike of approximately 3 miles, will explore a number of habitats on State and Forest Service lands, including grassland, aspen meadow, and conifer forest edge. At this time of year many of the nesting birds—such as Calliope Hummingbirds, Red-naped Sapsuckers, Dusky Flycatchers, Orange-crowned Warblers, and a wide variety of sparrows—will have arrived on their territories. Along with terrific views of the Gallatin Valley, the wildflowers on this walk will likely distract you from the diversity of birds. *8-person limit.*

JUNE 1: *MILLIGAN CANYON & THE HEADWATERS AREA*

(Until mid-afternoon; 2 miles of easy walking on gravel roads)

Leader: Robin Wolcott | **406-581-5418** | pajaros@wewolcotts.com (email preferred)

This trip begins with a walk through the arid limestone cliffs of Milligan Canyon. Canyon Wrens, Rock Wrens, and Spotted Towhees frequent this dry landscape. Golden Eagles and Pinyon Jays are also a possibility along this portion of the trip. Later in the morning we will explore some of the other areas near Three Forks, featuring a variety of habitats including sage/grassland and riparian, so anything from waterfowl to sparrows is possible. *4 car and 12-person limit.*

JUNE 3-5: *LEWISTOWN BIRD FESTIVAL*

Please contact Montana Audubon at **406-443-3949** or visit www.mtaudubon.org for information about the Festival.

JUNE 4: *JACKSON CREEK*

(4-5 hours; moderately strenuous walking on forest road 4 miles)

Leader: Lou Ann Harris | **406-600-3585** | montlou311@gmail.com

Located near Bozeman Pass, this area features a surprising mix of habitats and birds. We will begin this walk by passing through wet meadows and grasslands, and then follow Jackson Creek into higher-elevation conifer forests. This is the beginning of peak breeding season, so most of the birds should be singing and displaying at their best. Over 40 species of birds can be found along this short run of the creek, beginning with cranes and swallows in the open country. As you work your way up the creek several species of warblers inhabit the willows on one side of the road, while the dry slopes host an entirely different set of birds. Once in the upper forest, some higher-elevation birds will begin to make their presence known. *8-person limit.*

JUNE 5: *SPANISH CREEK*

(Until mid-afternoon; moderate walking on forest trail, with several hundred feet of elevation gain)

Leader: John Parker | **406-586-5863** | conundrumjp@gmail.com

This trip follows Spanish Creek, through the Flying D Ranch, to the edge of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. We will spend most of the morning birding along the road focusing on the grasslands and forest edges. Once at the trailhead there

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Spring Birding Series *continued from page 9*

is an interesting juxtaposition of habitats, which support an interesting mix of birds. In one direction the trail borders the wet willow riparian area along Spanish Creek, while going in the other direction, the trail climbs through dry open slopes. *12 person or 4 cars limit.*

JUNE 7: *BOZEMAN FISH TECHNOLOGY CENTER*

(Until late morning; moderate walking)

Leader: Steve DuBois | **907-978-5784** | sddubois907@gmail.com

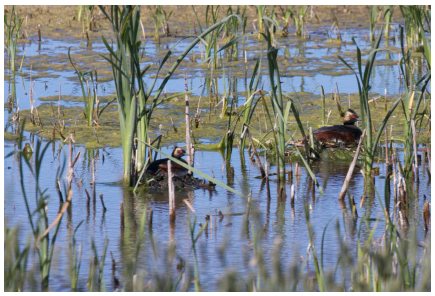
There are several habitat types that come together in this relatively compact area, including the riparian areas along Bridger Creek and the conifer slopes of Drinking Horse Mountain. Many of the breeding birds should already be on their territories and actively singing and nesting at this date. Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Townsend's Solitaires, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and American Dippers are expected here. Meet at the Drinking Horse Trail parking lot at 7:00 AM. *8-person limit.*

Ruby-crowned Kinglet photo by Terri Narotzky.

JUNE 11: *SHIELDS VALLEY DRIVING TOUR*

(Options for half to full day)

Leader: Forrest Rowland | **814-573-1391** | rowbird2005@gmail.com



Eared Grebe photo by Lou Ann Harris.

The Shields Valley is home to some impressive diversity. When we leave Clyde Park, we will check some backroads and the riparian corridor along Highway 89 for nesting species as well as any migrants passing through. They should be out in force. We will also visit two separate marshes on the tour in search of Marsh Wren, Virginia Rail, and Sora. One of the highlights will be the visit to Cottonwood Reservoir, which can host an impressive variety of migrant shorebirds and waterfowl including displaying Western and Eared Grebes. The nearby sagebrush environs provide a good chance to study Brewer's Sparrow and Sage Thrashers. Finally, we will head up the Shield River Valley drainage to explore some coniferous and montane riparian habitats to round out the experience! Meet at the Clyde Park Post Office parking lot, at 7:30 AM for car-pooling. *4 vehicle and 15-person limit.*

JUNE 12: *BRIDGER FOOTHILLS*

(1/2-day trip; easy to moderate off-trail walking)

Leader: Vicki Saab | **406-581-7829** | victoriaannsaab@gmail.com

We will spend the morning exploring the burn within the 2020 Bridger Foothills Fire perimeter. This is an opportunity to visit a recent burn and learn about post-fire ecology, including birds' responses and relationships to forest fires and burned landscapes. Notably, Black-backed Woodpeckers and other woodpeckers are known to rapidly return to recent burns to feast on the insect life unique to this fascinating change in the ecosystem. Join us to find out what other pioneering birds and plant life can be found in such a recently burned forest. *10-person limit.*

JUNE 15: *TRIPLE TREE TRAIL*

(5-hour trip; moderately strenuous climbing 500 ft. in 4 miles)

Leader: Woody Martyn | **406-224-1476** | woodymartyn@hotmail.com

As this trail climbs the hillside it passes through a number of habitats and transitional edges between them. At the bottom of the mountain, grassland quickly gives way to brushy deciduous habitat as the trail crosses Limestone Creek, where Ruffed Grouse, Calliope Hummingbirds, and Lazuli Buntings are some of the birds to expect. The trail then ascends through Douglas fir and Lodgepole pine forests, with a wide variety of nesting birds including Cassin's Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, and Western Tanager. This trip features perhaps the greatest diversity of any short hike in the Gallatin Valley. Meet at MOR at 6:45 AM. *8-person limit.*

JUNE 18: *CHESTNUT MOUNTAIN*

(1/2 day; hike of moderate difficulty, 4 miles out and back)

Leader: Andrew Guttenberg | **406-451-5427** | afgutte@hotmail.com

This trail climbs the north slopes of Chestnut Mountain, from Rocky Creek to the back side of Frog Rock. A wide diversity of birds breed here including several species of woodpeckers, flycatchers, and finches including Olive-sided Flycatcher and Cassin's Finch. The cool recesses harbor Swainson's Thrush and MacGillivray's Warbler. This may be the best local spot to find Ovenbirds. *8-person limit.*

Cassin's Finch photo by Terri Narotzky.

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Spring Birding Series *continued from page 10*

JUNE 19: *GLEN LAKE ROTARY PARK*

(3-4 hour trip; easy walking at most 2 miles)

Leader: Woody Martyn | **406-224-1476** | woodymartyn@hotmail.com

There are many possibilities at this local birding hotspot. Over 180 bird species have been seen in the recreation area. With a pond, riparian habitat, limited grassland, and mature cottonwoods, we hope to see good diversity of what Gallatin Valley has to offer during peak breeding season. Species may include flycatchers, Warbling Vireo, Gray Catbird, several warblers, Lazuli Bunting, and Black Headed Grosbeak. Meet at 7:00 AM at the Glen Lake parking lot. *8-person limit.*

JUNE 25: *MISSION CREEK*

(Until mid-late afternoon; mostly driving; light walking on roads)

Leader: Robin Wolcott | **406-581-5418** | pajaros@wewolcotts.com (email preferred)

In the rolling prairie just east of Livingston we will seek McCown's Longspur and Long-billed Curlew. Along Little Mission Creek we will watch for riparian species, then search for residents of the spruce/fir forest. On our return along Mission Creek, we could find a Cordilleran Flycatcher or a Golden Eagle. Over 130 species have been seen along this route including Sprague's Pipit, Upland Sandpiper, and Green-tailed Towhee. Spectacular views, abundant wild flowers, and wildlife make the trip through the northern foothills of the Absaroka Mountains a trip to remember. After leaving Bozeman, we will reconvene at Albertson's parking lot in Livingston at 7:30 AM, leaving from there at 7:45 AM. **Car-pooling is essential.** *4 vehicle and 14-person limit.*

JUNE 26: *ROCKY MOUNTAIN RD. BLUEBIRD TRAIL*

(1/2 day)

Leaders: Janne Hayward | **406-587-6124** | jannehayward@gmail.com and Lou Ann Harris | **406-600-3585** | montlou311@gmail.com

Mountain Bluebird photo by Terri Narotzky.

Get up close and personal with Mountain Bluebirds. Join bluebirders Janne Hayward and Lou Ann Harris as they check bluebird nest boxes and band adults and nestlings along Rocky Mountain Road. This is a rare opportunity to get an inside look at the lives of these amazing birds, including nest building, egg laying, and raising young. The participants on this trip will meet at 8:30 AM at the north end of the Target parking lot. Due to the sensitive nature of the work, we are limiting this field trip to 8 participants.

JULY 6: *BEAVER PONDS TRAIL, YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK*

(Full-day trip—12 hours; moderately strenuous hiking)

Leader: John Parker | **406-586-5863** | birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Once we arrive in Mammoth, we will be hiking the 5-mile Beaver Ponds Trail. The diversity of habitats along the Beaver Ponds Trail is unmatched by any other trail of such short length in Yellowstone. The Beaver Ponds Trail features a wide variety of birdlife including grouse, woodpeckers, and many sparrows as it passes through open forests, sagelands, and skirts several small ponds. If time allows, we will cover other locations on the northern range that are close to Mammoth. Meet at the Museum of the Rockies at 6:30 AM. *7-person limit.*

2022 Bridger Raptor Project: Seeking Observers and Housing

Sacajawea Audubon Society is once again sponsoring the annual count of migrating raptors atop Bridger Bowl Ski Area. This will be the 31st consecutive fall count of migrating Golden Eagles and 16 other species of hawks, eagles, falcons, and other birds of prey! Three expert Raptor Observers/Biologists are currently being recruited for the 25 August through 31 October field season. **IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO APPLY IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.**

We typically provide free housing for the observers in the Bozeman area for their days off and during periods of prolonged inclement weather. We have already secured donated housing starting September 6th and

continuing through the end of the season. If anyone would consider donating housing for one or more of the Observers from 25 August through 6 September, please contact Steve Hoffman, Project Coordinator, at swhoffman0322@gmail.com, or 406-461-5714. **THANK YOU for your kind consideration!**

CATS SAFE AT HOME

Photo by Christopher-Schruff.

by Lou Ann Harris

Sacajawea Audubon Society has begun a new program to address the issue of free-roaming domestic cats and their impact on birds. It's called "Cats Safe At Home" and includes educational information on keeping cats indoors, creating an outdoor enclosure or "catio," and walking your cat on a leash. It's been well-documented that free-roaming cats are the number one human-caused mortality of wild birds, killing approximately 2.4 billion each year in the U.S. alone.

In addition to depredating birds, outside cats are at an increased risk of disease, predation by other animals, or being hit by a vehicle. Help our wild birds by becoming a responsible cat owner. Keep your cat inside or in an outdoor enclosure. If you like to walk with your kitty, consider using a harness, or carry them in a backpack or stroller. There are many great options available. Containing cats is an easy way to provide cats with healthy, safe lives while reducing needless bird and other wildlife deaths.

Left: Phil Knight catio. Below: Jessica Leigh Heagler catio. Right: Frank Marchak catio.

To find out more, visit https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/cats-safe-at-home/.

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

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

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.

You could also win prizes and awards! To get your **Birdathon Kit** visit www.sacajaweaaudubon.org or call 406-600-6666. You'll also find information about Birdathon dates, rules, awards, and prizes.

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!

You can participate by: joining a team; forming a team; being a "backyard birder"; getting your business involved as a team or as a sponsor; sponsoring an adult or youth team; or pledging for an individual. The Birdathon Committee has maps, field guides, fundraising tips, and plenty of experience to share. **Contact** sacajaweaaudubon.org or call 406-600-6666.

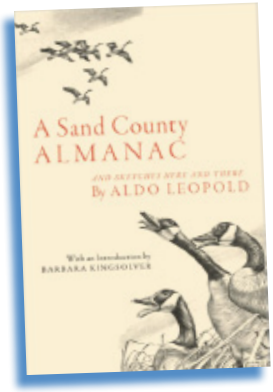
American Robin photo by Terri Narotzky.

However you choose to participate, please join us on **June 30th** at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve for the **Birdathon Award & Celebration Party!**

Do You Have a Good Book to Recommend?

The Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) Book Club is actively soliciting recommendations of books to be included in the lineup for the 2022-23 season. We encourage all SAS Book Club members to nominate at least one book to be read and discussed by the membership next season.

Biographies, scientific works, investigative journalism, novels, mysteries, and essays have been part of the Book Club's portfolio. In previous years, most Book Club selections have focused on birdlife, yet the Club also reads about broader environmental issues and solutions that can inform our roles as advocates for birds and all living beings. Although we are all tempted to focus on brand new titles, in recent years the Book Club members have also enjoyed rereading old classics such as Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac.*



Book nominations are welcome until May 6th, 2022.

Please email or text message your suggestions to:

Elisabeth Swanson
elsswa@gmail.com
406-570-8325

- OR -

Hilary Johnson
ralphhilary@gmail.com
406-599-1446

After a vote of the Book Club membership, the top-rated selections for next season will be posted promptly to the Book Club listserv—just in time for leisurely summer reading!

The SAS Book Club meets on the third Wednesday of the month from September through April. **Our next meeting is scheduled for September 21, 2022.**

Have a great summer and happy reading!

Dogs on Leash, Please!

By Chris Nixon

As Bozeman's human population grows, so does its canine population.

In days long past, Bozeman's landscape was filled with many more wetlands, and those wetlands would have naturally supported an abundance of wildlife including waterfowl.

The trapping and elimination of beaver for the fur industry was the first big blow to the area's wetlands, as beaver were no longer there to engineer dams and create ponds and the water-filled earthen sponges on which the ponds were perched. Next came the draining of many remaining wetlands in order to expose the deep fertile soils for growing agricultural crops and to create even larger expanses of nutrient-rich grass for grazing livestock.

Now those drained agricultural soils are being hidden—likely forever—under foundations, sidewalks, and roads for our burgeoning population. Wetlands are still being impacted for further development, leaving only a scattered few wetland areas and ponds surrounded by subdivisions full of us and our dogs.

The few remaining ducks, geese, wetland-dependent bird species, and other species of wildlife lucky enough to find a place to nest or rear young in these tiny exposed wetlands are under extreme threat of disturbance by our actions—especially those of our beloved canines.

Multiple studies document the impacts that our presence has upon wildlife.* Those studies further show that wetland birds and wildlife suffer increased stress by just the presence of dogs. After all, dogs are predators and wildlife species realize this. The level of disturbance and harm to wildlife increases if dogs are not on a leash and allowed to happily frolic in these areas.

Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) is joining with the City of Bozeman to generate and install temporary signs to remind dog owners that dogs are required to be on leash in public park areas unless parks are signed otherwise: as designated off-leash areas or dog parks. Plans are to install signs at several park wetlands as soon as possible. These signs will remain through mid-July, when waterfowl have likely finished nesting and rearing their young.

Sandhill Crane photo by John Harris.

We all need to become more cognizant of our actions and the disturbance our dogs can inflict on wildlife. SAS is receiving more frequent complaints about individuals actually encouraging their dogs to chase ducks for fun and exercise. Hopefully the signs will inform those yet unaware of the need to protect waterfowl and their nests, which are extremely vulnerable to disturbance, nest abandonment, and/or destruction during this time of year.

Ducks and migratory birds have the laws behind them. But with lack of awareness, concern, or dedicated supervision on the part of dog owners, the birds have little chance. During nesting season, please make sure dogs are on leash as appropriate.

* *"The impact of Dogs on Wildlife and Water Quality"* by Lori Hennings, Senior Natural Resource Scientist in Portland. A PDF of the article can easily be found online.

Photo courtesy of J. Marzluff

May 18, 2022, Virtual Presentation

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 to refine 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 and to join the virtual presentation.

A Tremendous Thanks to Mary Ellen Schlosser

Mary Ellen Schlosser

All of us on the Board of Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) wish to express our tremendous gratitude to Mary Ellen Schlosser as she steps off the board to realize a long-held dream, which will necessitate a move from Bozeman and the state of Montana.

Mary Ellen has served as our Treasurer for the past two years and has overseen the growth of SAS and its finances with the increased demands in accounting. Mary's strength as a CPA—combined with her willingness to tackle the transfer of SAS's accounting into Quickbooks and expand the accounting framework—was a perfect fit. She was the right person at the right time. Mary's hard work and determination have made it so that her replacement will have fewer duties and more ease in the position. She insisted that we also add a bookkeeper, which has been done. Mary has paved the way for her successor to have a much smoother road.

As a result of the pandemic, Mary was never able to attend an SAS Board meeting that took place in person. Thus, Mary's smile has been virtual through her entire stint on the board. Mary's love of birds, background, and level of experience added so much to our board. She and her wonderful virtual smile is going to be sorely missed.

We wish her all the best as she and her husband take the big step to be closer to their kids and grandkids...lucky grandkids!

ALL ON BOARD!

We will be voting on Sacajawea Audubon Society Board members at the beginning of our **May 9, 2021 General Membership Meeting**.

PLEASE ATTEND.

And please contact our **Nominations Committee Chair, Aaron Clausen** (aaronclausen@sacajaweaaudubon.org) if you have interest or someone you know has interest in serving on the Sacajawea Audubon Society Board of Directors.

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 _____
(Street or PO Box)

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

Phone ( ) _____

Email _____

❖ Sacajawea Audubon Newsletter is sent by email. ☐ *I would like a paper newsletter mailed to me.*

❖ We do not share your information except with National Audubon, so your contact information is safe with us. Please check this box ☐ if you do not want your information shared with the 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!

5/22 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

DIM THE LIGHTS FOR BIRDS AT NIGHT

2022 WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

Every year, billions of birds migrate north in the spring and south in the fall, the majority of them flying at night, navigating with the night sky. However, as they pass over big cities on their way, they can become disoriented by bright artificial lights and skyglow, often causing them to collide with buildings or windows.

While lights can throw birds off their migration paths, bird fatalities are more directly caused by the amount of energy the birds waste flying around and calling out in confusion. The exhaustion can leave them vulnerable to other urban threats.

Join Sacajawea Audubon Society on May 14, 11 AM–4 PM at the IAWP, Library Lawn, and various local trails

Bird walks at Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve & local trails *(find details on the SAS facebook page and the SAS website closer to the date)*

Meet on the front lawn of the Bozeman Public Library where there will be games with fun prizes, including:

- The Great Migration Challenge Game
- Light Pollution Night Confusion Game

Share your time and enthusiasm!

Volunteers are wanted for tabling, helping run games, as trail ambassadors & experienced birders to guide bird walks. Contact:
sec@sacajaweaaudubon.org