MAY 2023

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.

SAS Annual Meeting, Potluck & Program: Monday, May 8th, Hope Lutheran Church

"eBird: A Bastion of Citizen Science that has Transformed our Understanding of Birds" *with Ed Harper*

Ed Harper

We recognize that birds provide an accurate lens to the health of our planet. Indeed, the more we learn about birds, the better we understand our own world. As a relatively new and very important tool, eBird is rapidly extending our knowledge about birds. It was developed through and is maintained by Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology. eBird transforms the global birding community's passion for birds into a powerful resource for research, conservation, and education. If you already use eBird, here is more information to maximize its usefulness for your own concerns. If you simply want to learn how eBird is aiding bird conservation or even how to apply it to your own avian interests, this program will be highly beneficial.

Ed Harper was born in Livingston, Montana, but ended up in Bozeman where he spent his childhood and attended college at Montana State where he majored in physics and mathematics. He developed his interest in birds at the age of six with a Killdeer being the spark bird. That passion has grown over the years to where he is now one of the leading birders in Montana, shuttling back and forth between homes in Bozeman and Carmichael, CA.

In 1980, Ed started leading tours for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. He has since led many tours throughout the USA and across the world by way of his own tour company. An enthusiastic teacher, Ed taught both mathematics and birding classes over a period of 34 years at American River College in Sacramento. He is a past president of Sacramento Audubon Society, past board member of the Western Field Ornithologists, and currently serves on the Montana Bird Records Committee.

An accomplished photographer, Ed has photographed more than 800 North American bird species and countless more on seven continents. Now fully retired, he is constantly afield with binoculars and camera. A champion of eBird, he has submitted more than 10,000 checklists containing more than 1,000 species photographed.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

This is our Annual Meeting and Board of Directors election. To attend virtually, please register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/9216280616939874912. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The in-person meeting on May 8th will be held at Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 W. Graf (off S. 19th). The potluck begins at 6:00 PM. Please bring a sweet or savory dish to share (plates and utensils provided—bring your own mug). There will be a main dish provided by SAS. After the potluck there will be a short meeting and board elections at 7:00 PM, immediately followed by the program.

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, #ebird, and #conservation.

SAS monthly 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.

Message *from* SAS President Chris Nixon

I want to thank each of you for being a very valued part of Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) and for continuing to support the SAS mission, especially through the extremely difficult past three years. Although COVID is still with us, at least some parts of our lives are swinging around to what we may think of as "back to normal."

I'm encouraged by all of the projects the Conservation Committee has underway. The Headwaters Important Bird Area (IBA) and Madison Valley IBA surveys are back on the list of opportunities for member participation (see article on page 7). The Committee has expanded their "Planting for Birds" and "Bird Friendly Windows" programs.

A proposal by the Craighead Institute, Gallatin Watershed Council, and SAS has been recommended for a grant from the Gallatin County Open Space Fund for improving wildlife habitat at the Gallatin County Regional Park (pending approval by the Gallatin County Commission). If approved, volunteers will be needed for planting and watering the new native trees, shrubs, and flowers at the park, so join the IAWP Busy Beavers to get involved.

Additional IAWP Busy Beaver activities will be taking place at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP) and other sites throughout the valley this summer. Volunteers at the IAWP will be gathering data for water level monitoring, breeding bird surveys, and a second BioBlitz. So, there is definitely a place for you to get involved this year!

Construction continues to be delayed at the IAWP as we wait for changes in railroad ownership to process through the federal system of reviews as Montana Rail Link is absorbed by Burlington Northern. You can learn more about the IAWP by joining one of the Friday morning bird walks (see box on page 3) or by checking bozemanwetlands.org.

In addition to the amazing series of Birding Workshops that naturalist Ashley Martens provides, this year she is teaming up with naturalist Cedar Mathers-Winn to offer "Art & Science of Bird Language" (see page 12 for more information).

Field Trip leader John Parker has arranged 18 great opportunities to see the birds of the region. John and 14 other SAS members have volunteered to lead these various spring and early summer birding trips (see list of trips on page 8).

Finally, you may be the person we are looking for to fill one of the open positions on the SAS Board of Directors. We encourage you to share your skills with SAS. To get an application or to learn more, please contact Aaron Clausen at aaronclausen@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Officers

President	Chris Nixon pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Vice President	John Edwards vicepres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Treasurer (acting)	Loreene Reid treas@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Secretary	Emma Narotzky sec@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Board Members

Billy Burton	billyburton@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Aaron Clausen	aaronclausen@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Travis Kidd	education@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Frank Marchak	frankmarchak@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Kyle Moon	programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Loreene Reid	loreener@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Vicki Saab	vickisaab@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Janet Winnie	janetwinnie@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Bobcat Board member Kam Dorrington	boardroombobcat@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Activity Leaders

Education Chair	**Looking for Volunteer** education@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Conservation Co-Chairs	Paulette Epple conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org Lou Ann Harris louann@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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
Programs	Kyle Moon programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Website	**Looking for Volunteer** webmaster@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Social Media	**Looking for Volunteer** socialmedia@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Wetlands Preservation	Loreene Reid wetlands@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Book Club	Elisabeth Swanson & Hilary Johnson elsswa@gmail.com | ralphhilary@gmail.com
Newsletter Design	Amy Kelley Hoitsma aok@mcn.net

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE
UPDATE: MAY 2023

THE WETLAND PRESERVATION PROJECT (WPP) was initiated to accomplish Sacajawea Audubon Society's mission to protect and restore increasingly rare wetland and riparian habitats in our region, and to provide educational opportunities and enjoyment for generations to come. The IAWP is the first of our wetland protection projects.

The **Wetland Preservation Project Committee** is working diligently to tie up the final details on the IAWP wetland restoration. As you likely know, the main railroad runs right through the IAWP. While we wait for a response from Montana Rail Link/Burlington Northern before we are able to proceed with construction, the wildlife are actively enjoying the spring weather.

As you walk the trail along the berm, you will see three **photo stations**. Help us document the changes to the wetland by taking a photo—following instructions—and uploading your photo to the internet.

The IAWP **beavers** have been at work! The beaver lodge at the end of the berm is now surrounded by a bit of open water. Geese and Sandhill Cranes are selecting nesting areas. Several duck species have been spotted.

The calendar is filling up with **summer activities** at the wetland as part of our education mission. Please check Bozemanwetlands.org and watch your email for opportunities throughout the summer. And don't forget to attend a **Friday morning bird walk** (see box below). You can watch the wetland awaken!

Finally, please consider volunteering for the IAWP by becoming an **IAWP Busy Beaver**. Visit https://bozemanwetlands.org/WP/become-a-busy-beaver for more information and to sign up for the IAWP Busy Beavers 2023 Volunteer Team. **Thank you!**

April view of the IAWP from the Wood Duck photo station. Photo by Loreene Reid.

SPECIAL IAWP TOURS & ACTIVITIES for 2023

Curious about the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve (IAWP) that Sacajawea Audubon Society is restoring and enhancing? Eager to see some great birds without leaving the city? Join IAWP guides for **Friday morning bird walks**.

Time: 8:00 AM–10:00 AM. Meet at Café M (777 E. Main St.) for a brief talk about the IAWP 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

2023 DATES:

Friday, May 5, 2023

Friday, May 12, 2023

Saturday, May 13, 2023
Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day at the IAWP
(see article page 16)

Friday, May 19, 2023

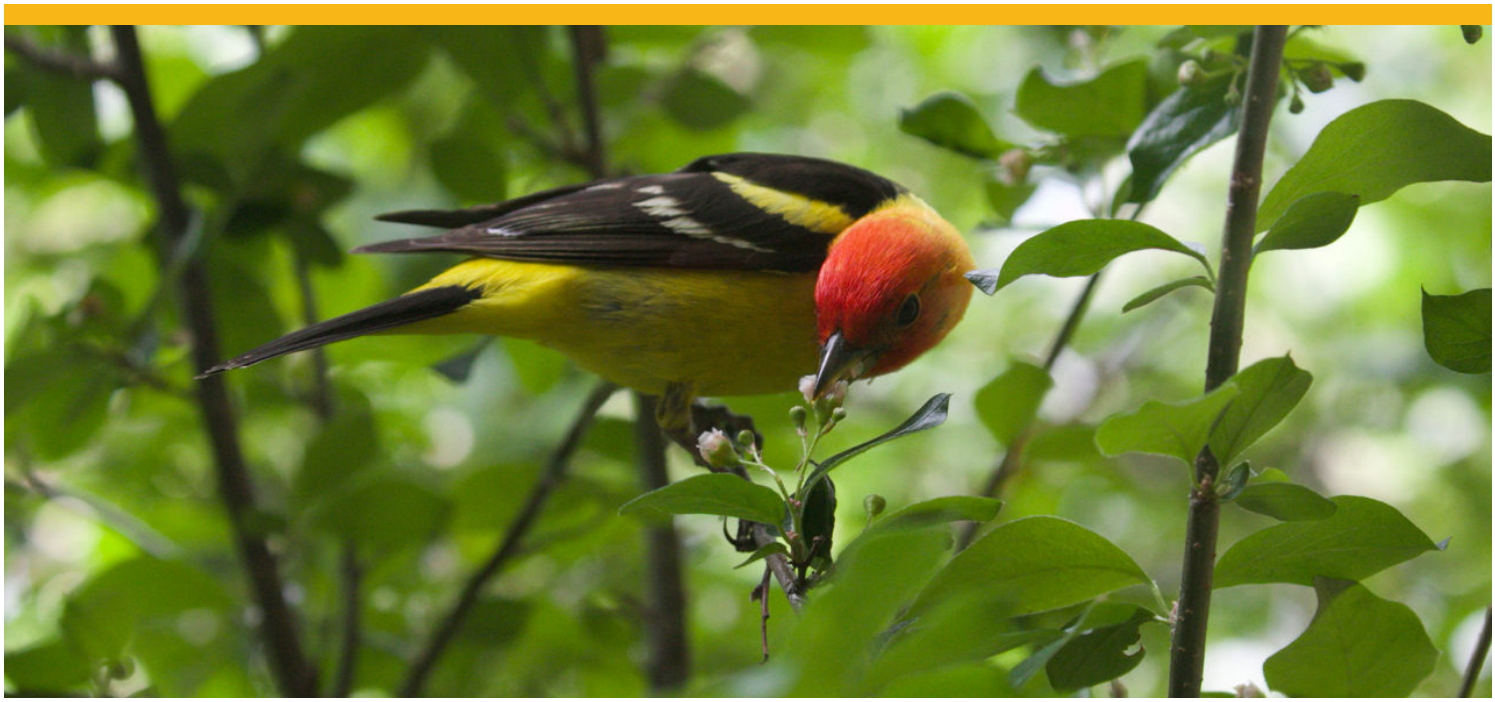
Friday, May 26, 2023

Friday, June 2, 2023

Friday, June 9, 2023

Friday, June 16, 2023

Friday, June 23, 2023



Wester Tanager eating a cotoneaster blossom. Photo by Lou Ann Harris.

Join us for Story Mill Community Park Bird Walks!

Thursdays—May 4, May 11, May 18, May 25 and June 1 from 8–9:30 AM

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.

We will meet in front of the Story Mill Community Center off of Bridger Canyon Drive at 8 AM. Bring your binoculars and your enthusiasm for a unique birding experience. Pre-registration is required. Visit: https://www.bozeman.net/departments/parks-and-recreation/recreation.

See you at Story Mill Community Park!

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY 2023 BIRDATHON: Saturday, May 20–Tuesday, June 27, 2023

A Birdathon is similar to a walk-a-thon, but instead of collecting pledges per mile walked, you spend a great spring day outdoors 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 from May 20–June 27, 2023. You collect pledges per bird species and the money raised benefits SAS Conservation and Education projects.

Participants have a chance to win prizes and awards! All of the information you need is in the **Birdathon Kit**, which you can find online at sacajaweaaudubon.org

Want to join a team or need help setting up a team? Contact Loreene Reid at loreener@sacajaweaudubon.org or 406-600-6666.

Does your business want to take a business "Bird Break"? Trade in your briefcase for binoculars, grab your co-workers, and count birds on your lunch hour! Businesses can also become birdathon sponsors, creating a company birdathon team. Sign up today!

Outside Bozeman's 2022 Birdathon team. Photo by Ian Roderer.

BIRD NOTES

by John Parker

To say that this past winter was long might be an understatement. Not surprisingly, some of the early migrating birds were late arriving this spring. The **Mountain Bluebird** that Mary and John Griffith spotted on Pass Creek Road north of Bozeman on March 16th was the first of the year to be reported in Gallatin Valley. This arrival date was 7–10 days later than the typical first sighting. **Tree Swallows** still hadn't arrived by the end of the first week of April, which is 2–3 weeks later than usual. March 16th was also the date of the first reported **Sandhill Crane**, which was heard by Brooke Everest over south Bozeman.

The biggest news of the early spring migration was the pair of **Whooping Cranes** seen on March 27th by Patrice Walker Dello-Russo and Robert Dello-Russo. As Patrice and Robert watched from the Livingston Hospital parking lot, the pair of Whooping Cranes were visible for more than two minutes. Ascending from 50–100 feet above the Yellowstone River, the cranes circled, gaining altitude, and then flew to the northeast. With such a close and extended viewing, Patrice and Robert were able to get good looks at all the field marks—and as a bonus, the cranes were calling as they circled above. Whooping Cranes are rarely seen outside of far eastern Montana, so this is truly an exceptional sighting, no doubt influenced by the large low pressure system that had moved across Wyoming the previous three days.

Sharp-tailed Grouse are an uncommon sight in the vicinity of Bozeman, so it was notable that Brian Cassell had a flock of up to nine birds visiting his yard east of town. The grouse were in the neighborhood from early February until early March.

On February 12th, Andrea Stierle spotted two **Turkey Vultures** in Paradise Valley for a rare winter record for the species.

A beautiful male **Eurasian Wigeon** was discovered at Central Park Pond on March 27th by Andrew Guttenberg. Over the next couple of weeks many people were able to see this uncommon migrant, along with the more expected waterfowl at the pond.

In Gardiner, Howard Wienberg and Katy Duffy had two early surprises visiting their yard. On April 1st a **Spotted Towhee** appeared in the yard, then five days later a **Lincoln's Sparrow** joined the towhee. Both of these bird species were a good three weeks earlier than the expected first sightings in this area of Montana.

Common Redpoll photo by Terri Narotzky.

And finally, the twelve **Common Redpolls** that Harold Ziolkowski saw on April 6th were unexpected—unexpected because very few redpolls had even been reported at all in the western United States this past winter.

Garden Buzz

by Lou Ann Harris

As the snow finally recedes and we welcome warmer weather, it's time to think about creating some habitat in your yard for birds and pollinators. This can be anything from a few pots of Bee Balm on your deck, to a native plant biohedge. **Using native plants is critical.** They provide the most benefit to pollinators and birds, and they are adapted to our climate.

The point is to make a start—and make a difference. If you need inspiration, check out Sacajawea Audubon Society's Bird-Friendly Demo Garden at Story Mill Community Park. You can also attend a free "Landscaping For Birds" workshop on July 15th (see the article below). Another great resource is Douglas Tallamy's book, *Nature's Best Hope*.

You really can make a difference!

Right: Riverside yard before and after planting a native plant garden. Photos by Lou Ann Harris.

GROW YOUR GARDEN FOR THE BIRDS!

Cedar Waxwing photo by Will Stuart.

Join Sacajawea Audubon Society and the City of Bozeman for a free workshop on **Landscaping for Birds** on **July 15, 9–10:30 AM**, at the **Story Mill Community Center** (600 Bridger Canyon Drive). Learn about the best plants and landscaping practices for making your yard a welcoming haven for songbirds, pollinators, and other wildlife. Attend a half-hour presentation in the Story Mill Community Center and then take a short walk to the Plants for Birds Demonstration Garden in Story Mill Park. You will learn landscaping tips and see first-hand the top plants that attract birds and provide them with what they need to thrive in our communities.

Pre-registration required. 15 person limit. To register, visit the City of Bozeman Recreation Department website at https://www.bozeman.net/departments/parks-and-recreation/recreation

IBA Surveys are Back!

Article and photo by Lou Ann Harris

Spring has returned and so have the **Important Bird Area** (IBA) surveys. In the past Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) volunteers surveyed Ennis Lake, surrounding areas, and Headwaters State Park to monitor birds in these important bird locations. But for the last few years the IBA surveys were on hold. SAS is reviving the surveys to continue monitoring birds that use these important areas in Gallatin and Madison counties.

If you are interested in using your birding skills to help monitor our local Important Bird Areas, join one or more of these IBA surveys:

MISSOURI HEADWATERS STATE PARK IBA SURVEY: SUNDAY, MAY 7 and SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2023

For more information and to join the Headwaters surveys, contact Martha Collins *(pictured)*: marthcoll@msn.com | 406 579-0506

MADISON VALLEY IBA SURVEY: TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2023

For more information and to join the Madison Valley survey, contact Adele Pittendrigh: adele.pittendrigh@gmail.com | 406-599-5086

Save the dates: SAS SUMMER GARDEN TOURS

Bird Friendly Garden Tour

July 28, 2023, 6:30 PM

This inspiring tour includes two in-town yards that have been designed to attract birds, pollinators, and other wildlife as well as create inviting outdoor living spaces. Jennifer Madgic has a layered landscape of trees and berry-producing shrubs for bird habitat and lush gardens of perennials for insects and pollinators. We will also visit the nearby gardens of Amy Stix, who eliminated all mowed lawn in her front yard and now has a welcoming landscape of perennials, grasses, and shrubs. The plants she chose attract birds and pollinators, supporting biodiversity right in the heart of Bozeman.

Bees and Butterflies Garden Tour

August 14, 2023, 6:30 PM

Learn about the fascinating lives of native bees and honey bees as we visit the gardens of Casey Delphia and Justin Runyon. They have planted their small Bozeman yard with large gardens of native drought-tolerant flowers and turned it into a haven for bees, butterflies, moths, and birds.

An inviting front yard of drought-tolerant perennials and grasses. Photo by Paulette Epple.

15-person limit and registration is required. Contact either Vicki Saab (vickisaab@sacajaweaaudubon.org) or Paulette Epple (conservation@ sacajaweaaudubon.org) to register and get directions.

2023 Sacajawea Audubon Society 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 a particular trip. If you signed up for a trip but are unable to attend, please notify the trip leader; others may be on a waiting list. Field trips are limited to a certain number of participants and vehicles. Carpools will be arranged prior to the trip or at the pre-determined 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; some of the longer trips might require that you pack a lunch. An offer to help with gas 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 13 SATURDAY: *HEADWATERS STATE PARK*

Leader: Dave Story 206-718-5940 | story.david.m@gmail.com
(1/2 day trip; easy walking)

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; depart at 7:00 AM. For those wishing to meet at Headwaters area, please make arrangements with the trip leader. 15-person limit.

MAY 14 SUNDAY: *PARADISE VALLEY DRIVING TOUR*

Leader: George Kelly 406-220-0282 | gjkingfisher@gmail.com
(1/2 day trip; easy walking)

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 20 SATURDAY: *MIDDLE COTTONWOOD CANYON*

Leader: Woody Martyn 406-224-1476
woodymartyn@hotmail.com
(4–5 hours; moderate walking with some rocky terrain; 2–3 miles total)

This is an opportunity to stretch your legs and look for some early arriving migrants in the Bridger foothills north of Bozeman. Middle Cottonwood has a mix of riparian habitat, mature north-facing conifers, and relatively dry open south-facing hillsides. We'll be looking for species such as Western Tanager, MacGillivray's Warbler, Calliope Hummingbird, Lazuli Bunting, Green-tailed Towhee, and Swainson's Thrush along the lower reaches of the canyon. 8-person limit.

Missouri Headwaters State Park photo by Brett Whaley.

MAY 21 SUNDAY: *GLEN LAKE ROTARY PARK*

Leader: Brian Thorpe 406-581-8544 | thorpe_22@hotmail.com (underscore between thorpe and 22)

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

There are many possibilities at this local birding hotspot. More than 180 bird species have been seen in the recreation area. 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 at 7:00 AM at the Glen Lake parking lot. 8-person limit.

MAY 23 TUESDAY: *SOURDOUGH NATURE TRAIL*

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

(3–4 hours; easy walking)

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 neotropic birds nesting here are Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, and Black-headed Grosbeak. 8-person limit.

MAY 27 SATURDAY: *MILLIGAN CANYON & THE HEADWATERS AREA*

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

(Until midafternoon; 2 miles easy walking on gravel roads)

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.

MAY 28 SUNDAY: *MOUNT ELLIS*

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

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

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 3 SATURDAY: *SWEET GRASS COUNTY PRAIRIE BIRD TOUR*

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

(Full-day tour, with option for early departure)

Celebrate the prairies during the height of the breeding season. We will follow an approximately 45-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. Stops at wetlands will feature water birds. Meet in Big Timber (63 miles east of Bozeman on Interstate 90) at the Town Pump located at I-90 Exit 367 at 8:00 AM. 12-person limit.

JUNE 4 SUNDAY: *JACKSON CREEK*

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

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

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. More than 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 on the dry slopes an entirely different set of birds can be found. Once in the upper forest, some higher-elevation birds will begin to make their presence known. 8-person limit.

JUNE 7 WEDNESDAY: *BOZEMAN FISH TECHNOLOGY CENTER/ DRINKING HORSE MOUNTAIN*

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

(Until late morning; moderate walking)

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 by 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.

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2023 Sacajawea Audubon Society Spring Birding Series *(cont. from page 9)*

JUNE 9-11: *WINGS ACROSS THE BIG SKY FESTIVAL*

Please contact Montana Audubon 406-443-3949 or visit www.mtaudubon.org for more information.

JUNE 10 SATURDAY: *MISSION CREEK*

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

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

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. More than 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 and then leave from there at 7:45 AM. Carpooling is essential. 3-vehicle and 10-person limit.

JUNE 11 SUNDAY: *SPANISH CREEK*

Leader: Tim Preso 406-600-3302 | presofamily@msn.com

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

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 is a juxtaposition of habitats that support an interesting mix of birds. In one direction the trail borders the wet willow riparian area along Spanish Creek; going in the other direction, the trail climbs through dry, open slopes. 10-person or 4-car limit.

JUNE 14 WEDNESDAY: *TRIPLE TREE TRAIL*

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

(5–hour trip; moderately strenuous climbing 500 ft, 4 miles)

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

Lazuli Bunting photo by Terri Narotzky.

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 17 SATURDAY: *CHESTNUT MOUNTAIN*

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

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

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 Olive-sided Flycatcher, Cassin's Finch, and several species of woodpeckers, as well as other flycatchers and finches. The cool recesses harbor Swainson's Thrush and MacGillivray's Warbler. This may be the best local spot to find Ovenbirds. 8-person limit.

JUNE 18 SUNDAY: *BRIDGER FOOTHILLS*

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

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

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 bird 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 24 SATURDAY: *SHIELDS VALLEY DRIVING TOUR*

Leader: Forrest Rowland 814-573-1391
rowbird2005@gmail.com
(Options for half to full day)

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 are 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 carpooling. 4-vehicle and 15-person limit.

JUNE 25 SUNDAY: *ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROAD BLUEBIRD TRAIL*

Leaders: Janne Hayward 406-587-6124 | jannehayward@gmail.com, and Lou Ann Harris 406-600-3585 montlou311@gmail.com *(1/2 day)*

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. 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.

JUNE 29 THURSDAY: *BEAVER PONDS TRAIL—YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK*

Leader: John Parker 406-586-5863
birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
(Full day trip–12 hours; moderately strenuous hiking)

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 at 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. 8-person limit.

The June 18 field trip will explore the burn within the 2020 Bridger Foothills Fire perimeter. Photo by Vicki Saab.

Peregrine watching at Headwaters State Park. Photo by Lou Ann Harris.

2023 SACAJAWEA AUDUBON 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's there in the first place? To help you answer all these questions and more, Sacajawea Audubon Society is offering a **Beginning Birding Workshop**, **Intermediate Birding Short Courses**, and a **Deep Nature Connection Series**.

NEW THIS YEAR, naturalists Ashley Martens and Cedar Mathers-Winn will be teaming up to offer **Art & Science of Bird Language** through the lenses of primitive survival skills and animal communication.

All courses (except Art & Science of Bird Language) will be taught by Ashley Martens, M.S. Ashley is 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 beings around us. Contact Ashley at 208-883-4998 or truenatureed@gmail.com for more information.

Register for all classes at https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/z6-Cv3H9dCAFcdyulrTijQ

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 two sections of this course this year. Section A will have field trips on Friday mornings. Section B will have field trips on Saturday mornings. Sections A & B will meet together for classroom sessions.

Classroom Sessions

Sections A & B: Wednesday evenings (May 10, May 31, June 21), 6:00-7:30 PM at Wild Birds Unlimited store on 19th St.

Field Trips

Section A: Friday mornings (May 12, June 2, June 23), 7–10 AM at various locations.

Section B: Saturday mornings (May 13, June 3, June 24), 7–10 AM at various locations.

Cost: $100 for SAS members; $120 for non-members.

Maximum 9 students per section. Supply lists will be provided upon registration.

GIVE BIG GALLATIN VALLEY 2023

This year Sacajawea Audubon Society requests that you **GIVE BIG** to one of our partner organizations. They are: **Gallatin Watershed Council** *(working with our IAWP Busy Beaver volunteers)*; **Montana Land Reliance** *(assisting with our IAWP conservation easement)*; **Craighead Institute** *(improving wildlife habitat at the Gallatin County Regional Park)*; and **Crosscut Mountain Sports Center** *(collaborated with our Birding and Wildlife Workshops)*

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!

ART & SCIENCE OF 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 an owl about to fly through the area. Bird language can also open a window into the lives of birds as individuals, from the intimacy of courtship to the drama of territorial duels. Come learn the ancient art of bird language paired with modern scientific studies in animal communication. In class we'll explore each of the five voices of the birds, and learn some alarm patterns. Then we'll practice identifying these voices and patterns in the field. Awareness of bird language also inevitably leads to a deeper awareness of self. Join naturalists Ashley Martens and Cedar Mathers-Winn for our first collaboration!

Classroom Session: Thursday, June 8th, 5:30–7:30 PM at Hope Lutheran Church

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

Cost: $60 SAS members; $70 nonmembers

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 by plumage, song/call, and habitat clues.

Classroom Session: Thursday, June 15th, 5:30–7 PM at Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trip: Sunday, June 18th, 7–10 AM (location TBA)

Cost: $50 for SAS members; $60 nonmembers

SPARROWS & ALLIES

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

Classroom Session: Thursday, June 29th, 5:30–7 PM at Hope Lutheran Church

Field Trip: Sunday, July 2nd, 7–10 AM (location TBA)

Cost: $50 for SAS members; $60 nonmembers

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 as well as the many other lovely songsters in our region by sight and songs. 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 identifications as well. Other birds/families we will be sure to include are: vireos, flycatchers, grosbeaks, and the Western Tanager.

Classroom Session: Wednesday, July 5th, 5:30–7 PM at Hope Lutheran Church

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

Cost: $50 for SAS members; $60 nonmembers

DEEP NATURE CONNECTION SERIES

For four weeks, we will gather in community and practice methods to develop a deeper understanding and connection to wild nature and natural cycles. We will investigate nature through mindfulness practices, play, observation, and inspiration. 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, 9–11 AM (May 24, May 31, June 7, June 14)

- **Week 1** – Observing & Sit Spot
- **Week 2** – Wandering & Edible/Medicinal Plants
- **Week 3** – Listening & Bird Language
- **Week 4** – Connecting with Natural Cycles

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: $90 for the series. Maximum 9 students. Near-town location TBA.

Register for all classes at https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/z6-Cv3H9dCAFcdyulrTijQ

Wings Across the Big Sky—Flock *to the* Falls with your Family!

June 9–11, 2023 *at the* Heritage Inn, Great Falls, Montana

Great Falls, Montana photo by Jerrye & Roy Klotz, MD.

wings MONTANA AUDUBON across the big sky

Montana Audubon is excited to announce that registration for the Wings Across the Big Sky Festival is now open! You can find the link for the online registration at https://mtaudubon.org/outreach/wings/

Book your room by May 25, 2023, for a special festival rate.

Montana's premier birding festival, organized by Montana Audubon and this year's local host chapter, Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon, will be held June 9-11, 2023. The festival headquarters is the Heritage Inn on the west side of Great Falls. Registration starts at 3 PM on Friday, followed by dinner and a keynote address.

Numerous field trips will explore the wildlife-rich landscapes of this historic and adventure-filled part of the state.

We hope that more families will join us this year so that the legacy of birding and outdoor recreation continues well into the future, thereby fostering the next generation of conservation-minded citizens in Montana and beyond.

We are excited for you all to join us in June and hope you have a great time birding with us.

SNEED COLLARD III TO PRESENT AT WINGS ACROSS THE BIG SKY

The keynote speaker for this year's Wings Across the Big Sky festival is acclaimed author Sneed B. Collard III, who has written more than 90 books for young people. Sneed is a popular, award-winning speaker and has spoken at numerous birding festivals and events.

During the presentation, Sneed will recount the entertaining adventures behind his humorous, award-winning memoir *Warblers and Woodpeckers: A Father-Son Big Year of Birding* (Mountaineers, 2018) and other bird books and articles. Along the way, participants will travel to some of America's best birding hotspots as well as South America, the Galápagos, and the Middle East. Sneed will share highlights of his son's and his "accidental Big Years" of 2022 starring Pinky, America's most famous flamingo.

To learn more about Sneed, visit his websites: www.sneedbcollardiii.com and www.FatherSonBirding.com.

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY BOOK CLUB UPDATE *for* MAY 2023

Like many of you, Book Club co-chairs Elisabeth and Hilary will soon be exchanging our reading glasses for binoculars and heading to the field for the summer months. You will find us on local trails, along streams, tending to our gardens, and doing more listening to birdsongs than concentrated reading on our deck chairs. However, before we hang our "GONE BIRDING!" sign on the door, there is some important old business to be finished.

Each spring, Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) Book Club members nominate a slate of books the Club will read, discuss, and sometimes hotly debate during the next season. Although the deadline for nominations was April 21st this year, there's still time to vote on selections for the 2023–2024 season. To receive a ballot via email, please contact Elisabeth Swanson at 406-570-8325 or elsswa@gmail.com. **Voting for next season book selections ends on May 5th.** The winners will be announced on May 15th via the Book Club email list and in the Sacajawea Audubon Society newsletter on September 1st.

The Book Club hosts seven meetings annually, on the third Wednesday of the month from September through April, with a break during December. The Book Club meetings are hybrid with some members participating in the discussions in person at Hope Lutheran Church and others joining the group virtually. From May through August, SAS Book Club is on sabbatical. Avid readers as we are, in the summer we will be outdoors more than in the library.

If you would like to be included in monthly email reminders, please email Elisabeth Swanson at elsswa@gmail.com or call her at (406) 570-8325. For other questions, you can email our other leader, Hilary Johnson, at ralphhilary@gmail.com, or call her at (406) 599-1446.

Contact John Winnie at jwinniejr@msn.com or Holbrook Travel at holbrooktravel.com for more information.

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP 2023

Individual or Family | January–December 2023

❒ **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 is Needed

Name _____

Address _____
(Street or PO Box)

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

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Sacajawea Audubon Society's Newsletter is sent by email. ❒ I would like a paper newsletter mailed to me.

*We do not share your information except with National Audubon Society, 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!

MAY '23 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 10th 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

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2023 | WATER: SUSTAINING BIRD LIFE

Water is fundamental to life on our planet. The vast majority of migratory birds rely on aquatic ecosystems during their life cycles. Inland and coastal wetlands, rivers, lakes, streams, marshes, and ponds are all vital for feeding, drinking, or nesting, and also as places to rest and refuel during their long journeys.

Saturday, May 1, 2023: WMBD bird walk at IAWP from 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

Saturday, May 1, 2023: WMBD activities for families at IAWP from 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM. Please park in the lot at 777 East Main and walk across Broadway Ave. Follow the trail that begins to the right of Village Downtown Blvd. and behind the Residence Inn, just below the bluff to the IAWP. Look for the SAS canopy.

The American White Pelican, one of the featured species highlighting this year's WMBD theme, breeds primarily on isolated islands in freshwater lakes and feeds in inland marshes, lakes, or rivers. This species prefers shallow water and depends on coastal estuaries in winter, where they meet their cousin, the Brown Pelican. They are often found on sandbanks, where they rest and perch. Human disturbance can cause American White Pelicans to leave nests and even abandon their eggs and young. This species is also impacted by flooding where they nest and feed. Photo by Kyle Moon.