DECEMBER 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 Holiday Program: Monday, December 11, The Ellen Theatre

"Think Like a Raven" *with John Marzluff*

John Marzluff in Denali. Photo by Avery Meeker.

THINK LIKE A RAVEN is a culmination of John Marzluff's collaborative work detailing the intertwined lives of ravens, wolves, pumas, and the people who visit and live around Yellowstone. The talk's arc follows the seasons of Yellowstone and the scientific journey he undertook to decode the mysteries of raven life. With colleagues, he tagged 60 birds with state-of-the-art transmitters. The birds shared their secrets as they flew a hundred miles directly to new kills, commandeered territory, found mates, and reared young. The picture that emerged from their study was that of a highly opportunistic bird with the knowledge that allowed them to exploit wolves but not depend on them. Observations revealed a tenuous and evolving relationship between humans, wolves, and ravens, and the challenges animals face when they wander beyond the protection a national park provides.

Wolves and Ravens at a kill. Photo by John Marzluff.

John Marzluff is JamesW. Ridgeway Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington. His graduate (Northern Arizona University) and initial post-doctoral (University of Vermont) research focused on the social behavior and ecology of jays and ravens. He continues this theme investigating the intriguing behavior of crows, ravens, and jays. His current research focuses on the interactions of ravens and wolves in Yellowstone. He teaches Ornithology, Governance and Conservation of Rare Species, Field Research in Yellowstone, and Natural and Cultural History of Costa Rica.

Netting Ravens. Photo by Andrius Pasukoni.

Professor Marzluff has written six books and edited several others. His *Welcome to Subirdia* (2014 Yale) reveals that moderately settled lands host a splendid array of biological diversity and suggests ways in which people can steward these riches to benefit birds and themselves. His most recent *In Search of Meadowlarks* (2020 Yale) connects our agriculture and diets to the conservation of birds and other wildlife.

Dr. Marzluff has mentored over 40 graduate students and authored over 170 scientific papers on various aspects of bird behavior and wildlife management. He is a member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Recovery Team for the critically endangered Mariana Crow, a former member of the Washington Biodiversity Council, a Fellow of the American Ornithologist's Union, a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a National Geographic Explorer.

This special in-person SAS program will be held at the Ellen Theatre on December 11th. Doors open at 6 PM; the program will begin at 7 PM. This program is free and open the public. A $5 suggested donation is appreciated. For virtual attendance, please register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6396590749207113560. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

SAS monthly programs are free and open to the public, featuring special guest speakers the 2nd Monday of each month, September through May. For more information, contact Ken Sinay at programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

MESSAGE *from* SAS PRESIDENT, CHRIS NIXON

It has been a very full year of activities and enjoyment for all of us involved with Sacajawea Audubon Society. A large number of you have taken the time to participate in the special events and monthly membership meetings. SAS has collaborated with an increasing number of organizations to promote the understanding, enjoyment, and protection of the birds and diverse environments in our region. The various committees have been busy and effective at promoting their work. Our three new SAS Board Members have jumped 'all in' making huge contributions to the SAS Board.

Even though 2023 is now winding down, there are still several options for you to enjoy the company of like-minded individuals within SAS. Be sure to mark your calendar and join us for the special December speaker event by John Marzluff at the Ellen Theatre. Contact our trip leaders and help out with one (or more) of the the many Christmas Bird Counts. It sounds like SAS is planning for a sweet Christmas. Stop by the SAS tent at this year's Christmas Stroll on Main Street, Bozeman in front of Chalet Sports, to enjoy S'mores with SAS volunteers.

Consider giving the Christmas gift of Birding Classes with Ashley Martens. Your gift won't take up space but will provide years of enjoyment for the recipient/s.

Sadly, long term members and supporters of SAS, such as Jean Setter, have passed. They will be sorely missed. But we celebrate their lives and how they made the world, and our lives better for choosing to be part of SAS during their journey.

SAS is an increasingly rare type of not-for-profit organization being membership based and led. Each and every member is very important and valued! Each member has the opportunity to participate and help direct the activities of SAS. Consider joining the SAS Board! Volunteer to help at SAS events and attend informative programs provided through SAS. We don't want to miss out on all you can bring to SAS.

I encourage each of you to renew your membership and expand your participation in SAS activities in the coming 2024. I'm grateful that Sean Peters has volunteered to step up as the new Chair of our Hospitality Committee. I'm sure Sean would welcome your assistance.

Celebrate the Holidays! Share good food! Dance with a friend! Hug lots! And get out and enjoy the birds!

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Officers

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

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Boardroom Bobcat member Jack Evans	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	Sean Peters hospitality@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Membership	Loreene Reid membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Newsletter	Terri Narotzky newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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Social Media/ Communications	Lou Ann Harris socialmedia@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Wetlands Preservation	Loreene Reid wetlands@sacajaweaaudubon.org
IAWP/Busy Beavers Stewardship Coordinator	Emma Narotzky wetlands@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Book Club	Elisabeth Swanson & Hilary Johnson bookclub@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Newsletter Design	Tamara Knappenberger tkknappenberger@gmail.com

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE UPDATE: DEC. 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.

Stewardship at the IAWP: many accomplishments of the Busy Beavers

Update by Emma Narotzky

Opportunities to volunteer for the wetland arise all year long, but the main season for outdoor work onsite ends in the fall. The 2023 volunteer season at the IAWP wrapped up with the Busy Beaver Rendezvous toward the end of October. Fifteen volunteers enjoyed the mild weather as they worked on clearing the culvert, installing bat boxes, and winterizing the wetland infrastructure. The group also enjoyed the birds who remained at the wetland, including magpies, mallards, and vocal kingfishers hunting near the trail. The crew, consisting of seasoned Busy Beavers, new volunteers, and SAS board members ended the day with a pizza party in the pavilion.

The bat box crew: Vicki Saab, Cathy Stamm, Patrice Burr, Robin Hellyer, and Suzy Hoberecht. Not pictured: Sarah Paulos. Photo by Sarah Paulos.

Participants of the Spooky Stroll. Photo by Emma Narotzky.

Summary of the Season:

60 volunteers gave over 750 hours of their time during the spring through fall 2023 season:

- Bird surveys and point counts, Water monitoring, Second Annual BioBlitz
- Field trips and events reaching all ages from preschool to adults including: MSU classes, a series of trips for MOSS, workshops at the wetland with instructors including Todd Breitenfeldt and Jennifer Jones, World Migratory Bird Day, Spooky Stroll, and World Wetlands Day
- Free and discounted workshops for Busy Beavers including Raptor ID with Steve Hoffman
- Weed pulls, cleanups, and building work days – Busy Beavers built a pavilion, set up two new bat boxes and one new wood duck box, and repaired the berm boardwalk.

Sign up to be a Busy Beaver (scan the QR code) and pledge just 10 hours of your time in 2024 to contribute to your local urban wetland restoration project. When you become a Busy Beaver you join a community of people who share a dedication to wetland conservation and outreach, and you gain access to discounted and free workshops by SAS throughout the year.

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In 2023 the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve saw an abundance of stewardship activities that met our vision and goals. Our urban wetland is serving as an environmental study area offering education about wetland ecology accessible to all ages. Our vision is to document the effect of human influence on wetland communities and inspire the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands.

The Wetland Preservation Project Committee is working hard to finalize the restoration planning and the Sacajawea Wetland Mitigation Bank. The following provides a brief snapshot of our progress on the restoration planning, construction timeframes, and the proposed wetland mitigation bank.

Wetland Restoration Planning and Design

Recent Accomplishments

SAS worked with the City of Bozeman and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to finalize plans for temporary construction access for the restoration and enhancement of the IAWP.

SAS has been working with adjacent landowners to provide additional land buffers to the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve. This will assist in the protection of the wetland including possible incorporation into the overall site management by SAS.

Current Restoration Challenges

Our main roadblock to beginning the restoration and enhancement of the IAWP, as planned, is the Montana Rail Link (MRL) lease agreements. Restoration construction timeframe has been pushed to the fall of 2024, with the hope that lease agreements will be finalized within the next few months.

If lease agreements with MRL require a redesign, there could be an estimated additional cost in the range of $35,000 and a loss of some wetland functions. For this reason, SAS feels strongly that a site visit by the engineer(s) commenting on the design is warranted. Repeated attempts to have currently employed MRL and/or Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) engineers visit the site have been unsuccessful and have not been acknowledged.

It is important to note that during our initial review of the conceptual plan with a former MRL engineer in 2019, the feedback provided was enthusiastically positive with no concerns raised. In fact, the feedback provided at that time

Early signs of winter at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve. Photo by Terri Narotzky.

acknowledged the benefits of the proposed restoration work to the railroad in terms of water control, reduced wildlife mortality, and increased safety–all of which were used to inform the current design.

Wetland Mitigation Banking

Recent Accomplishments

The wetland mitigation banking prospectus and draft wetland mitigation plan have been reviewed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Interagency Review Team (IRT). Comments have been received from the USACE and the IRT with most having been addressed.

Montana Land Reliance (MLR) has developed a draft conservation easement that is in compliance with the USACE requirements, and that will serve to protect and preserve the site into perpetuity.

Montana Freshwater Partners has worked with SAS to set up a management plan for the Sacajawea Wetland Bank. This includes identification of the correct insurance group, type of insurance, and appropriate level of bonding and insurance needed that is commensurate with the level of risk posed by the restoration actions.

Current Wetland Bank Challenges

Because the design cannot be finalized until MRL/BNSF provides a site inspection, the current wetland mitigation plan cannot be finalized as proposed.

USACE has stated that restoration actions cannot be completed until the wetland mitigation plan has been finalized and signed.

Request from SAS President Chris Nixon

Protecting this wetland and creating a wetland mitigation bank continues to be an arduous, long, and demanding process. If this was a simple matter, others would have undertaken this responsibility before us and there would be many more remaining functional and productive wetlands within Bozeman and the Gallatin Valley. Dedicated SAS Board Members, SAS Wetland Conservation Committee members, volunteers, and partner organizations have made huge strides in protecting the remaining wetlands at the IAWP and in the Gallatin River Watershed. We have truly made wetland protection a priority as never before in the Gallatin River drainage. Your continued support both financially and otherwise is critical to protecting our rare remaining wetlands.

Please consider making a monetary gift to the IAWP. If your finances do not permit giving financially, please consider joining the IAWP Busy Beavers. Every contribution you make of your funds and of your time is impactful for wetland preservation in the Gallatin Valley! *Thank You* from our Hearts!

A view of the beaver dam at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve on a rainy evening. Photo by Tamara Knappenberger.

Thank you for supporting the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve!

We need your help to create the largest restored urban wetland in Montana! We envision this project becoming an oasis in our urban setting where one can find the tranquility that wetlands offer.

Donate using the QR code, or online at www.bozemanwetlands.org/WP/donate/

Save the Date in 2024

World Wetlands Day:

February 2 : World Wetlands Day is celebrated on Feb 2nd to mark the adoption of the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. It is an opportunity to celebrate the beauty and biodiversity of wetlands while promoting the importance of preserving these unique ecosystems for current and future generations.

Watch for updates from SAS on this year's celebration!

Upcoming SAS Programs

January 8: Doug Smith - with new book Yellowstone Birds: Diversity and Abundance in the World's First National Park

February 12: Matt Skoglund of North Bridger Bison, the first Audubon Certified Bison Ranch in MT

BIRD NOTES

by John Parker

Visiting nearly any lake or pond before freeze-up in late fall will eventually produce surprising birds. Maybe it will be a first for the location, or possibly even a new county or state bird record. This fall was no exception with many interesting birds appearing at several of this area's bodies of water.

During the period of stormy weather late in October, many birds were being pushed from the north, in particular, large flights of swans and geese. The biggest surprise of the fall was a **Brant** that Reder Daughenbaugh found October 27th during a snowstorm. The Brant was on a pond in the Home 40 subdivision south of Bozeman. There have only been fourteen previous records of this small goose in Montana. This bird record will be reviewed by the Montana Bird Records Committee, but it does appear to be an immature Brant swimming with a flock of Canada Geese. Two days earlier, as the storm system first arrived in the area, a single **Greater White-fronted Goose** appeared on Glen Lake in northeast Bozeman. Matt Keefer, Lou Ann Harris, and Andrew Guttenberg were the first to see this bird late on the afternoon of October 25th. Over the course of the next ten days, many other birders were able to see as many as five Greater White-fronted Geese on Glen Lake.

The same day Andrew and Lou Ann saw the Greater White-fronted Goose, they also found a **Short-billed Gull** among the many Ring-billed Gulls on Glen Lake. This sometimes difficult-to-identify small gull is rarely seen in Montana away from Flathead Lake, and this is only the second sighting for Gallatin County (the previous county record was also at Glen Lake).

In mid-October **Surf Scoters** turned up at two different lakes in this area. On October 14th Reder Daughenbaugh spotted two Surf Scoters on Hyalite Reservoir, and the following day Kevin Ellison found a single Surf Scoter on Cottonwood Reservoir north of Wilsall. Then on November 11th Laura Dykstra discovered another Surf Scoter at Glen Lake. After the aforementioned stormy weather, Hobart Collins and John Parker found single **White-winged Scoters** on Ennis Lake and Harrison Reservoir on November 1st.

Late this fall there was an impressive wave of shorebirds moving through the area, with **Greater Yellowlegs** and **Long-billed Dowitchers** being the most numerous early in November. While on their trip to Harrison Reservoir the 1st of November, Hobart and John were excited to find seven species of shorebirds including the expected **Killdeer**, yellowlegs and dowitchers.

Long-billed Dowitchers. Photo by John Parker.

More surprising were a group of 11 **Wilson's Snipe**, and one each of **American Avocet**, **Pectoral Sandpiper**, and **Black-bellied Plover**. But the most exciting find of the day were the three **Sanderling**. A week later Nate Kohler discovered another unusual shorebird at Harrison, a **Dunlin**.

On October 18th, while scanning through numerous **Common Loons** along the east shore of Ennis Lake, Vic Fesolowitz spotted a **Red-throated Loon**. Red-throated Loons are quite rare anywhere inland and are seen only every few years in this corner of Montana. Vic also found a **Pacific Loon,** somewhat more commonly seen in our area, on November 1st on Harrison Reservoir. Matt Keefer saw another Pacific Loon November 11th at the Three Forks Ponds.

A few nice late fall passerines made appearances in the area. Two different **Varied Thrushes** were seen within two days of each other. The first Varied Thrush was in Matt Tekiela's Manhattan yard on October 26th. Then on October 28th Peter Sellin saw another Varied Thrush in east Bozeman. On October 21st, while walking the Sourdough Nature Trail, Robin Wolcott heard a different chip note coming from the dogwoods along a ditch. Robin confirmed the call of a **Swamp Sparrow** with an excellent audio recording and later photographs. In the woods east of Glen Lake, Cathleen Stamm saw a **Black-headed Grosbeak** on October 19th. This is a full month later than the last Black-headed Grosbeak is typically seen here. And finally, perhaps a harbinger of things to come, George and Valerie Nixon had this area's first **Common Redpoll** coming to their feeder on October 22nd.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2023

by John Parker

Come and join in on the fun during one or more of our area's Christmas Bird Counts. The Christmas Bird Counts are an opportunity for beginning and expert birders to get together for the day and share this holiday tradition. If you are unable to join a count for the entire day, another option for participation is to be a feeder watcher. Please contact the compiler if you would like to be a feeder watcher for one of the counts.

Please Contact the area compiler before the count, as this will give them the opportunity to plan and organize the count before the count day. For more information, contact the area count compilers. Participation in all counts is free.

Ennis

Thursday, December 14th

Compiler: Robin Wolcott, (406) 581-5418

pajaros@wewolcotts.com
email preferred

Bozeman

Saturday, December 16th

Compiler: John Parker, (406) 586-5863

conundrumjp@gmail.com

Livingston

Sunday, December 17th

Compiler: George Nixon, (406) 219-6169

hawkowl526@gmail.com

Yellowstone

Sunday, December 17th

Compiler: Woody Martyn, (406) 224-1476

woodymartyn@hotmail.com

West Yellowstone

Sunday, December 17th

Compiler: Tut Fuentevilla, (406) 646-7001

education@grizzlydiscoveryctr.com

Teams may observe by car, foot, snowmobile, or ski on the day of the event. There will be an optional meeting at the Grizzly & Wolf Center at 7:30 AM for participants to gather before heading out to their routes or counting locations.

Three Forks

Tuesday, December 27th

Compiler: Sam Koenen, (406) 600-7502

goodbirding@gmail.com

Ruby Valley

Tuesday, January 2nd

Compiler: Tom Forwood, (406) 570-6432

tjfishing75@gmail.com
email preferred

Thanks for a Successful 2023!

A Year of Birds

by Pat Craig

Each year the birds—our feathered friends–
Lift our hearts, our souls transcend
We watch and wonder as we search
Our minds in reverence in this church

In wintertime, the owls at night
Hoot their whos as dark gets light
Then magpies, finches, chickadees
Chatter their hilarity

With spring we get the transients
The ones who come for breeding chance
The warblers, larks, and sandhill cranes
Dancing, prancing cross the plains

The towhees sport their tails of green
While tanagers boast tangerine
And there, a curlew with that beak
That makes you wonder how they eat

The orioles so orange in glory
Holler out a territory
And female catbirds in romance
Are charmed by rusty underpants

Let's not forget the mourning doves
Who coo their song to long-time loves
We'll even mention on this roster
Collared doves—those coy imposters

As spring winds down and summer nears
The colors all but disappear
Deep within the leafy trees
The birds pursue their urge to flee

When snow arrives, the white resplendent
Wint'ring birds again ascendant
We light our lights, our lives adjourned
As we await the Sun's return

And so I close this ode to birds
My holiday of verse and words
And wish that YOU out there in nature
Find some birds of nomenclature

2023 Bridger Raptor Migration Project Update

By Anna Wolke

On October 31st, the Bridger Range was blanketed in white after the first substantial snowfall of the season. It was a beautiful, sunny morning as May Buckingham and I started up the mountain on skis and snowshoes to conduct our final count for the 2023 Bridger Raptor Migration Project. After 2 months, 370.23 observational hours, and 52 hikes up to the ridge, it felt surreal to be going up for our last day at "the office" (what we fondly called our observation point on the Bridger Bowl helicopter pad). A lot had changed since we first started on August 27th — the temperatures were dropping, days were getting shorter, and raptor species diversity was steadily dwindling. After a snowstorm that kept us off the ridge for five days in a row, we were happy to have two final days to complete our season totals. So without further ado, here is a final summary of what we saw this year!

In total, we recorded **2,602** migrating raptors.

Immature Northern Harrier. Photo by Anna Wolke.

We had all-time record counts for…

Turkey Vultures (57)

Broad-winged Hawks (81)

Cooper's Hawks (389)

American Kestrels (233)

We also had near-record counts for…

Northern Harriers (204)

Merlins (31)

Our record high count for one day was **265** raptors on September 27th. This was also the day we recorded **25 Broad-winged Hawks,** the most we saw in a single day!

Unfortunately we ended the season with the second lowest **Golden Eagle** count in this project's history, with only **675** migrants total. This is just over half of the long-term average seen at the Bridger Mountains Hawkwatch site.*

Curious to know about our totals for other specific species? Check out hawkcount.org, or keep an eye out for the publication of our final report!

*We suspect that avian flu may have been a major contributing factor to our low Golden Eagle count this season. Changing climate conditions in northern breeding habitats may also be impacting raptor populations and migration routes.

Thank you to all who visited us on the ridge, supported this project, and followed along with us this season! Aside from the many amazing raptor sightings this Fall, one of the greatest parts of this experience has been getting to know the local community. Every day I looked forward to meeting new people on the ridge and seeing familiar faces return to help us count, which always made the days feel incredibly full and rewarding. May and I both graduated from St. Lawrence University this past Spring and we could not have asked for a better post-grad experience. We had some unforgettable bird encounters — watching a Sharp-shinned Hawk flush nine Pinyon Jays from the trees, having a curious immature harrier circle just feet above our heads, and watching with awe when pushes of Golden Eagles passed by one-by-one, just to name a few! Raptorfest was also a highlight of the season — teaching kids how to input data and learn species codes, hearing about people's latest exciting wildlife sightings, and experiencing folks of all ages sharing a love and interest for birds!

May Buckingham at the Bridger Mountains Hawkwatch. Photo by Anna Wolke.

Thank you to Sacajawea Audubon Society for funding this project and emphasizing the importance of this work. Without member support, this would not have been possible and your contributions are greatly appreciated. We now have 32 consecutive years of raptor migration data for the Hawkwatch site in the Bridger Mountains. Having this long-term dataset allows us to analyze long-term trends and better understand what our raptor populations are experiencing.

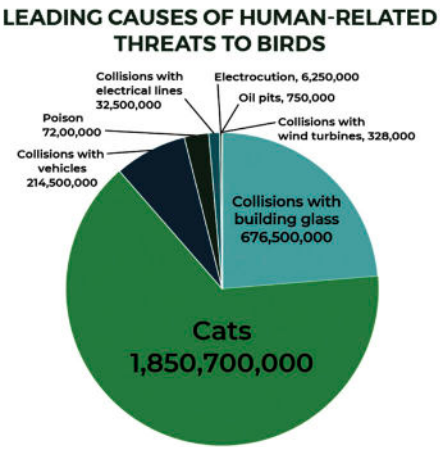
Special thanks to the following for your time and commitment to the project this year — Steve Hoffman, Loreene Reid, Margaret Hillhouse, Paulette Epple, Beth Madden, John Parker, Andrew Guttenberg, John Ashley, Nina Moore, Corinne Casolara, Rob Malo, Vicki Saab, Judy Tsiang, and many more!

Keep Cats Safe Committee

by Ashley Martens

Last summer, the Keep Cats Safe Committee visited the Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter to teach the Pet Pals Summer Campers about how outdoor cats affect wild birds. We gathered in a grassy lawn in the blazing sun to play a modified version of The Great Migration Challenge Game with 20 very enthusiastic children. Each child chose a bird identity and then "migrated" through a series of stations that taught of the helpers and hazards along the way. To emphasize the effects that outdoor cats have on wild birds, we added several extra stations where kids might end up in the game that said "A pet cat catches you and eats you. Sorry! You died." The majority of kids that played the game reported that their assumed bird-identity was "killed by a cat." Indeed, these statistics represent the truth: outdoor domestic cats are the leading cause of human-related threats to birds and kill around 2 billion wild birds annually (see figure at left).

Summer campers at Heart of the Valley "fly" back after playing the Great Migration Challenge Game with the Keep Cats Safe committee. Photo by HOV staff.



Source: U.S. Fish, Wildlife, and Parks– based on multiple studies
https://fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/threats-to-birds.php

The Keep Cats Safe Committee aims to educate the public about these impacts and empower cat-owners to take good care of their cats and wild birds by keeping cats indoors, training cats to walk on leashes, and creating "catios" for cats to enjoy outdoor time without harming birds.

For more information, please visit Sacajawea Audubon Society's Keep Cats Safe webpage at https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/cats-safe-at-home.

THE ROSY FINCH PROJECT

Over the past three years, the Rosy Finch Project collected data from 1,912 feeder counts contributed by 298 community scientists in 10 states! Although this phase of research is finished, those of us lucky enough to see these delightful birds at our winter feeders can continue to share data through Cornell's Project Feeder Watch and in eBird.

If you observe rosy finches, look for colored leg bands. The researchers at Sageland Collaborative would like to know the color, date and location spotted. Email such observations to: janice@sagelandcollaborative.org

For more information about what is being learned, see *Demystifying Rosy-Finches: Understanding the American West's Off-the-Grid Endemics* https://abcbirds.org/rosy-finches/

A banded Gray-crowned Rosy Finch. Note that these bands can be any color of the rainbow. Photo by Janice Gardner with Sageland Collaborative.

Sacajawea Audubon Society Book Club

Just a reminder that the Book Club does not meet during the month of December. **Our next meeting will be January 17th at Hope Lutheran Church at 6:30.** We will be reading *Fox and I: An Uncommon Friendship* by Catherine Raven. We hope to see you in the new year.

Cheers, Hilary and Elisabeth

Thank you to those who have already renewed your SAS Annual Local Membership

We encourage all to join or renew today for January- December 2024

Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) encourages all of you who enjoy our field trips and monthly programs or support our conservation work to join/renew your local chapter membership. 100% of your Local Membership dues will directly support SAS educational and conservation programs.

Even if you belong to the National Audubon Society (NAS), we need your support through a Local SAS Membership. As an SAS member you'll enjoy the benefits of membership while knowing that your annual dues are used locally for conservation right here in your own neighborhood.

Please help us ensure a secure future for what remains of the wildlife and wildlands in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem of Montana by joining our flock and flying high together today.

You can choose from the following membership levels as an Individual or Family:

- ❒ Basic Membership ……..…….. $25
- ❒ Supporting Membership ….....…..… $50
  (Supporting = additional local conservation and education projects)
- ❒ Student Membership …… $10
  (College & High School Students)

Join or Renew for 2024 by filling out the membership form on the next page, or online at: https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/for-members/.

For membership questions, email membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

SAS Members:

- Protect working lands for birds and other wildlife;
- Preserve and protect bird species and their habitats;
- Support bird-friendly communities in Montana with our bird-friendly landscape program;
- Contribute to important environmental education programs for people of all ages and abilities on birds, wildlife, and habitat;
- Support vital partnerships between other nonprofit environmental groups, citizens, and local governments to shape the health of our community; and
- Advocate for important environmental issues locally and regionally.

Common Raven. Photo by Ed Harper.

SAS Members Enjoy:

- Free Monthly Keynote Speaker meetings;
- Savings on purchases and access to member-only sales;
- Free *Birding Hotspots of Gallatin Valley*, a guide to birding around the Gallatin Valley and beyond;
- Free monthly member e-newsletter, so you'll always know what's going on (published nine times/year);
- Member-only discounts on educational courses, programs, and special events;
- Opportunities to meet new people and become part of a friendly group that shares an interest in birds, wildlife, the environment, and conservation;
- Participation in many citizen science projects; and
- Free guided birding field trips.

Sacajawea Audubon Society's Local Chapter membership does not include membership in the National Audubon Society. SAS is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with its own board of directors, membership, budget, and programs. We rely on financial support from local members to carry out our wide array of programs.

As a chapter of National Audubon Society (NAS), we fully value and support their work and advocacy. We encourage you, in addition to your SAS local membership, to join or renew your membership in NAS. Check the box on the SAS membership form and add $20 to join or renew with NAS.

We hope that you will join today as we approach our 57th year as an effective local grass-roots group – building on an interest in birds to promote the conservation of our natural environment through enjoyment, education, and action.

Thank you from Sacajawea Audubon Society's Board of Directors!

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP 2024

Individual or Family | January–December 2024

❒ **Basic Membership** **$25**

❒ **Supporting Membership** **$50**
(Supporting local conservation & education projects)

❒ **Student Membership** **$10**
(College & High School Students)

❒ **Additional Donation $**_____

❒ Bridger Raptor Study ❒ Wetland Campaign
❒ Story Mill Park Bird Feeding Station ❒ Wherever is Needed

Name _____

Address _____
(Street or PO Box)

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

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Sacajawea Audubon Society 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!

Dec '23 newsletter

Bridger Raptor Project Raffle for 2023-24 adult season ski pass to Bridger Bowl

BE ONE OF ONLY TWO WINNERS!

There is nothing quite like observing fall raptor migration in the Bridger Mountains! For the past 32 years, one of the most important localities for monitoring migrating Golden Eagles in the western United States has been the Bridger Range, northeast of Bozeman, Montana. The Bridger monitoring site is located at the top of the ridge adjacent to the Bridger Bowl Ski area *(see article on page 8)*.

The Bridger Mountains Raptor Survey is funded and managed by Sacajawea Audubon Society. We are committed to continuing this management role for the foreseeable future, because continuation of this monitoring program is critical in providing the data needed to assess population trends in Golden Eagles and other raptors.

To help pay for the continuation of this program, **Bridger Bowl Ski Area has donated two Season Passes valued at $1,075 each**.

YOU can help cover the costs of the Bridger Mountain Raptor Count by purchasing a Bridger Raptor Project Raffle Ticket. **Only 500 tickets will be sold.**

Tickets are $10 each or 6 for $50. To get tickets:

1. **Mail** your check (with "Bridger Raptor Project raffle tickets" in the memo) to Sacajawea Audubon Society, PO Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 59771
2. **Call** or text **(406) 600-6666** for tickets
3. **Email** membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org and we will mail you tickets
4. **Purchase** raffle tickets at the SAS booth in front of Chalet Sports during the Christmas Stroll on December 2, and at the SAS meeting on December 11

The drawing will be held December 11 at the SAS meeting.

[NOTE: if you have already purchased your season pass, Bridger Bowl will reimburse you if you win!]

Sacajawea Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1711
Bozeman, MT 59771-1771

Change Service Requested

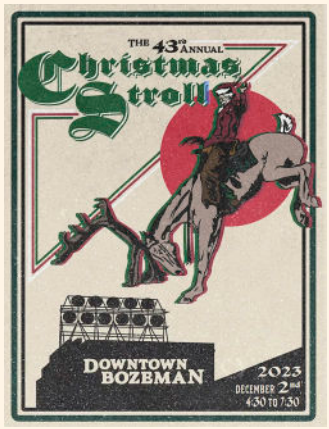
Sacajawea Audubon Society, affiliated with the National Audubon Society, meets on the second Monday of each month, September through May.

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



See you at the Christmas Stroll!

The annual downtown Bozeman Christmas Stroll will be Saturday, December 2 from 4:30 to 7:30 PM. Look for the Sacajawea Audubon Society canopy in front of Chalet Sports. Join us for S'mores and get your raffle tickets for a chance to win one of two Bridger Bowl season passes.

Give Birding Class Gift Certificates This Year!

Gift someone you love the experience of learning about birds. More experiences and less stuff is good for the environment and birds. It's good for everyone!

Sacajawea Audubon Society Birding Class Gift Certificates are good for classes offered by Ashley Martens in 2024. Recipients will receive course announcements via email.

Upcoming classes include a **Wonders of Winter Birding Series** (Canada Jays & Climate Change, Townsend's Solitaire & Juniper, and more), and the **Spring Birding Series** in May & June (Three-week Beginning Birding; Short Courses on Warblers, Sparrows, Cavity Nesters, Bird Language, Birding by Ear; and Deep Nature Connection Series).

Follow this link to start gifting now! https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/lS9acEnzVkZZ0UsXHQa15g

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Gift Certificate

2024 SAS Birding Workshops

Amount: _____

To: _____

From: _____

Image Non -redeemable

PO Box 1711, Bozeman, MT 59771
Membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org
406 600-6666
Sacajaweaaudubon.org