NOVEMBER 2024

Sacajawea Audubon News

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

SAS Monthly Program: Monday, November 11 at Hope Lutheran Church

Habitat R&R: Restoration and Research On Private Lands Reveals Much About Bird Populations In Montana

with Kate Stone

Kate Stone. Photo courtesy MPG Ranch.

The MPG Ranch encompasses 17,000 private acres in the Bitterroot Valley of western Montana. The landscape stretches from the meandering channels of the Bitterroot River through grasslands and shrublands up into coniferous forest. These plant communities have experienced a variety of anthropogenic changes from heavy grazing to complete conversion to non-native plant systems. Weed invasion and droughts present challenges for the future. How do you go about restoring ecological function in such diverse and degraded systems? Once you take action, how do you know if it worked? These questions are central to the mission of the MPG Ranch.

Kate Stone is a research ecologist at the MPG Ranch and oversees all aspects of their bird research program. In this presentation, Kate will share some of the ways MPG Ranch uses bird activity to evaluate the success of restoration treatments. She will also share how long-term observations of basic natural history reveal marvels about species like the Common Poorwill and Lewis's Woodpecker. Finally, she'll discuss MPG's efforts to develop research networks that address conservation at larger scales, largely through the use of the Motus Wildlife Tracking System.

You can't tell a male from a female Lewis's Woodpecker in the hand, but you'll learn how to tell them apart by vocalization in this presentation. Photo: Kate Stone.

What can 11 years of observation, 230 birds banded, and 120 birds tagged tell you about one Common Poorwill population? Photo: Kate Stone.

Kate earned her B.A. in Environmental Studies and Conservation Biology at Middlebury College, and M.S. in Forestry from the University of Montana. Kate's research focuses on a variety of topics that range from scavenger ecology to nocturnal insectivores to migratory songbirds. She is on the boards of both the Bitterroot Bird Alliance and the Ravalli County Open Lands Program and serves on the Montana Bird Records Committee. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, wild foraging, and artistic pursuits.

To attend virtually, please register at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1909266100510660704 After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The in-person meeting will be held at Hope Lutheran Church, 2152 West Graf. (off S 19th). A social begins at 6:30 PM; the program begins at 7:00 PM. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own reusable cups.

Attendees–whether in person or virtual–are encouraged to share their bird sightings at this and every monthly program.

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 Ken Sinay at programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org.

MESSAGE *from* SAS PRESIDENT, CHRIS NIXON

There is so much you/we can do to help the birds we all enjoy. Be certain to read how you can **prevent birds from striking your windows** and resulting bird injuries and deaths on page 8. Also simply by casting your **vote this November 5th**, you can join others campaigning to help reduce unnecessary **bird deaths from harmful plastic pollution**. See article on page 3.

The Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve trivia nights are proving to be very popular. Join us Tuesday, November 19 at Lockhorn Cider House as staff from Trout Unlimited bring us a string of fishy questions!

Please note that the venue has changed for our **Special Holiday Meeting on December 9th**. This year it will be held at the Emerson Center for the Arts and Culture rather than at The Ellen Theatre. So don't migrate to the wrong location for this colorful presentation by photographer/speaker Tom Murphy. Like our feathered friends, you want to be at the right place at the right time.

Jumping ahead to January and February there will be several incredible events focusing on wetlands and wetland ecology that you won't want to miss. So go ahead and mark your calendars!

On January 16, 2025, Ben Goldfarb, renowned author of *Eager, The Surprising Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter* will give a keynote presentation for Gallatin Valley Earth Day at the Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture. Allowing beavers to return to their historical haunts greatly improves and restores habitat for the vast majority of Montana's wildlife species. Learn why!

Then on January 30, 2025 - join SAS for a special program about the endangered species of wetlands at the Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture.

February 2, 2025 - **World Wetlands Day** is an annual event celebrated world wide! Meet us at the IAWP for a campfire, hot chocolate, and snowshoe tour.

And for certain, please go ahead and **renew your Sacajawea Audubon Society and National Audubon Society memberships ASAP** so that you don't miss out on all the things you can do to learn more about birds and how to better protect them this coming year. The birds need us more than ever. And in such a challenging world, WE NEED THEM MORE THAN EVER!

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Officers

President	Chris Nixon pres@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Vice President	**Open Position**
Treasurer	Loreene Reid treas@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Secretary	Emma Narotzky sec@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Board Members

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Ken Sinay	kensinay@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Boardroom Bobcat member Talia Seltzer	boardroombobcat@sacajaweaaudubon.org

Activity Leaders

Education Chair	**Open Position**
Conservation Co-Chairs	Paulette Epple conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org Lou Ann Harris louann@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Field Trips, Bird Sightings	John Parker birdsightings@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Hospitality	**Open Position**
Membership	Loreene Reid membership@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Newsletter	Terri Narotzky newsletter@sacajaweaaudubon.org
Programs	Ken Sinay programs@sacajaweaaudubon.org
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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

The Bozeman Plastics Ordinance

By Mikaela Howie

As you head to the ballot box this year, you may be hearing about the **Bozeman Plastics Ordinance (BPO), a citizens' ballot initiative that will prohibit the distribution and selling of single-use plastics bags (carryout bags) and polystyrene containers (food containers and packing peanuts) within the city of Bozeman.** If the BPO passes, Bozeman will join ranks with cities (and counties) worldwide that have reduced plastic pollution, taken action against microplastics in our waters, and saved money.

Plastic shopping bags in a stream. Photo: Terri Narotzky

Scientists are finding microplastics throughout the food web, in our soils, water, and even in our own bodies.

Biodegradable and sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic bags and food containers are already readily available for low cost for businesses in Bozeman.

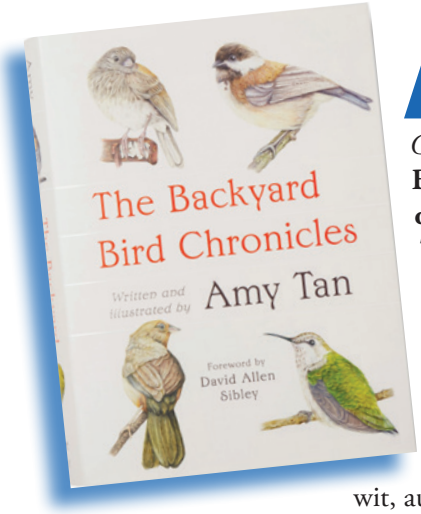
As birders, we have another reason to support reducing single-use plastics. It is well documented that seabirds ingest plastic bags when they mistake the bags for jellyfish, plankton and other food items. But did you know that plastic bags and the microplastics they degrade into are commonly found in terrestrial birds across Montana as well? Ingestion of plastics leads to a disease called Plasticosis that leads to starvation and death, especially in nestlings.

Birds can also easily become entangled in discarded plastic bags and even incorporate plastic into their nests, mistakenly thinking the plastic bags make good materials for lining their nests. Even if we don't litter, our plastic trash can still cause problems for birds when it falls out of our trash or blows out of the landfill. The best solution is to reduce plastic at the source.

By supporting the Bozeman Plastics Ordinance (BPO) in November, you will be helping keep plastic bags and microplastics out of our environment and keeping our birds healthy.

In addition to supporting the Bozeman Plastics Ordinance (BPO), you can go the extra mile by organizing a trash pick-up in your neighborhood, buying items with reduced or non-plastic packaging, and reusing plastic bottles at home. Learn more about the BPO here: https://www.mountainstatespolicy.org/bozeman-plastics-initiative-to-ban-plastic-bags-straws#:~:text=This%20November%2C%20voters%20in%20the,the%20measure%20on%20the%20ballot.

SAS Book Club News for November



Amy Tan wrote and illustrated her book, *The Backyard Bird Chronicles*, which the **SAS Book Club** will be discussing **on November 20th, 2024**. Tracking the natural beauty that surrounds us, this book maps the passage of time through daily entries, thoughtful questions and beautiful original sketches. With boundless charm and wit, author Tan charts her foray into birding and the natural wonders of the world. The Backyard Bird Chronicles will appeal to novice and experienced bird watchers alike, as well as environmentalists.

In 2016 Tan grew overwhelmed by the state of the world. In search of peace, she turned to the natural world just beyond her window, and specifically, to the birds visiting her yard. But what began as an attempt to find solace turned into something far greater: an opportunity to savor quiet moments during a volatile time, connect to nature in a meaningful way and imagine the intricate lives of the birds she admired.

"The drawings and essays in this book do a lot more than just describe the birds. They carry a sense of discovery through observation and drawing, suggest the layers of patterns in the natural world, and emphasize a deep personal connection between the watcher and the watched. The birds that inhabit Amy Tan's backyard seem a lot like the characters in her novels." David Allen Sibley

"Backyard Bird Chronicles is fun reading. It shows how we can become engaged emotionally, literally, and artistically with the natural world - to joyfully learn about the most accessible and yet wild animals…" Bernard Heinrich

Find us **Wednesday, November 20 at Hope Lutheran Church, room 128, from 6:30 to 7:45pm** talking, eating treats and discussing this book. We welcome you to come and see if this book club is something you would enjoy. If you would like to join us virtually call or email, Elisabeth Swanson at (406) 570-8325, elsswa@gmail.com before the meeting.

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY

INDRELAND AUDUBON WETLAND PRESERVE

UPDATE: NOVEMBER 2024

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 END-OF-SEASON BUSY BEAVER FALL RENDEZVOUS

On October 19th, about 35 Busy Beavers, board members, and visitors gathered at the wetland for the Fall Rendezvous and completed the final Busy Beaver workday of the 2024 field season. Kevin Cox built a new bench, which Busy Beavers installed. They took down the pavilion netting, moved the storage shed uphill next to the pavilion, sorted and organized contents, cleaned the binoculars, cleaned out Wood Duck boxes, emptied and leveled the host station box, cleaned the Chronolog stations, weeded and cleaned up the benches and host platform, picked up trash, wrapped trees, and took down some barbed wire. After these impressive accomplishments the volunteers gathered at the Kingfisher Pavilion for a cookout featuring burgers donated by North Bridger Bison Ranch, Montana's first Audubon-certified regenerative bison ranch. Several members of the Mount Hyalite Chapter of DAR who came to volunteer as a service project presented Loreene Reid with a DAR Conservation Certificate. The Busy Beavers celebrated the successes of the 2024 season and talked about their ambitions for 2025 while watching the crows arrive to roost for the evening.

Cathy Stamm & Kevin Cox preparing base for storage shed
Photo: Terri Narotzky

Dinner in the Kingfisher Pavilion!
Photo: Emma Narotzky

Want to make a difference? Join the Busy Beavers Volunteer Corp and get involved in our ongoing efforts to protect and enhance this unique urban wetland. Whether you're passionate about wildlife, conservation, or community, there's a place for you at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve. For more information visit the website www.bozemanwetlands.org or email emman@bozemanwetlands.org.

November Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Trivia Night

Join Sacajawea Audubon Society at Lockhorn Cider House for **November's Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve Trivia Night: Montana Trout Trivia with Trout Unlimited!** Learn about the species of trout that inhabit Montana's streams, lakes, and ponds and how plans for restoration at the IAWP include ways to benefit fish in Rocky Creek and the East Gallatin River. Will you reel in the prize with your knowledge of fish facts, or will you flounder and get schooled? Either way, you're sure to be hooked and come back for trivia on the third Tuesday of every month!

Tuesday, November 19
5:30 PM – Social Hour | 6:30 PM – Trivia begins

Trivia is free, followed by a raffle. Enter to win a fishy prize basket and benefit the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve.

Lockhorn Cider House – 21 S. Wallace, Bozeman

IAWP Trivia is on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at Lockhorn Cider House!

2024 BRIDGER RAPTOR FESTIVAL RECAP

by Paulette Epple

Once again the 2024 Bridger Raptor Festival was a huge success. Thousands of visitors, young and old, enjoyed warm, sunny weather and golden fall colors over the course of two days at Bridger Bowl. And judging by the smiles on nearly everyone's faces, most everyone came away with a renewed--or newly discovered--sense of appreciation for raptors. Participants enjoyed chances to see live raptors on display, including a Peregrine Falcon, Short-eared Owl, American Kestrel, and Turkey Vulture. Families also constructed chickadee nest boxes, dissected owl pellets, learned to use binoculars, attended raptor identification talks, and visited a dozen or more exhibitor tables. Many hardy hikers climbed to the ridge to help our raptor observers spot and count the raptors migrating south along the crest of the Bridger Mountains.

Study skins of birds fascinate kids. Photo: Paulette Epple

An enthusiastic family builds a nest box for chickadees. Photo: Lou Ann Harris

Every year Bridger Bowl opens its facilities and hosts this popular event in support of raptor conservation. Sacajawea Audubon Society has a big role and takes the lead in providing numerous educational activities for families including Sketch-a-Bird, Binocular Blitz, Build a Nifty Nest Box, and playing the Great Migration Challenge Game. This year we also provided face painting much to the delight of hundreds of enthusiastic kids. This celebration of raptors is free, open to all and is a fantastic gift to the community. It provides us with an opportunity to promote an appreciation of raptors and educate the public on the importance of a variety of conservation measures, such as the importance of using lead-free ammunition when hunting to protect the health of eagles and hawks, and treating our home's windows in various ways to make them visible to birds in order to prevent deadly window strikes.

Thanks to Bridger Bowl for hosting, and to Erin O'Connor and Katee Lynch for coordinating this fantastic event celebrating raptors! A huge shout out of **"THANKS!" to all the Sacajawea Audubon Society volunteers** for their hours of dedicated work that made the event such a huge success. We couldn't do it without you! *Ed Abbott, Jennifer Abbott, Cherie Barth, Dayna Bergin, Noreen Breeding, Roger Breeding, Gina Carolan, David Cole, Amy Cox, Heleen Cox, Kevin Cox, Hillary-Anne Crosby, Ruby Daughenbaugh, Connie Dillon, Dave Dillon, Andy Epple, Paulette Epple, Brooke Everest, Leo Freeman, Reagan Flentie, Adira Groundwater, Lou Ann Harris, Jeb Himsl, Rebecca Himsl, Rick Hixson, Steve Hoffman, Robin Hompesch, Christy Howard, Mikaela Howie, Travis Kidd, Bill Klenn, Erica Knappenberger, Kay Lansverk, Marvin Lansverk, Beth Madden, Adam Makhluf, Frank Marchak, Doug McSpadden, Nora Miller, Luke Minton, Timmy Mooring, Emma Narotzky, Terri Narotzky, Wea Nichols, Skyler Ochs, Mackenzie Osborn, Peggy Osbourn, Anne Ready, Loreene Reid, Dillon Shaffer, Cathy Stamm, Sherry Staub, Judy Tsiang, Mindy Visser, Kevin Ward, and Carol Zimmer.*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- ❒ **November 1: Project Feederwatch Begins** (through April 30, 2025)
- ❒ **November 11: SAS Monthly Program** with Research Ornithologist Kate Stone
- ❒ **November 13: Science Inquiry Series –** The Human-dominated "Anthropocene" Era Impacts on Wildlife - Wolves & Coyotes with Dr. Joanna Lambert
- ❒ **November 19: IAWP Trivia Night** at Lockhorn Cider House
- ❒ **December 7: Christmas Stroll** - Downtown Bozeman
- ❒ **December 9: HOLIDAY PROGRAM** at Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture
- ❒ **January 16: Gallatin Valley Earth Day Presentation** – Ben Goldfarb author of *Eager, The Surprising Secret Life of Beavers and Why they Matter* at Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture
- ❒ **January 30: Presentation** *World Wetland Day* at Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture
- ❒ **February 2: World Wetland Day** at IAWP
- ❒ **March 18 – May10: Master Naturalist Class**

2024 BRIDGER RAPTOR MIGRATION PROJECT UPDATE:

GOLDEN EAGLE COUNTS REMAIN LOW; MANY OTHER RAPTORS ARE STABLE.

by Steve Hoffman

We are now nearing the conclusion of our 33rd consecutive full season of scientific counts of migrating birds of prey along the Bridger Ridge, and we are excited to provide everyone a brief synopsis of the 2024 count results thus far. Each year these counts begin on August 27th and conclude on October 31st. This long-term raptor population monitoring project is a partnership between Sacajawea Audubon Society and HawkWatch International. Using these birds as barometers of ecosystem health, the chief goal of this important work is to assess long-term trends of 17 raptor species that use the Bridger Ridge as they migrate from their northern breeding grounds (located in the Pacific Northwest, western Canada and Alaska) to spend the non-breeding period in a warmer climate where prey is readily available.

First, we wish to thank our three intrepid full-time observers: Alicia Wilson, Adam Brown & Rosemary D'Andrea. They have been doing an exceptional, highly professional job throughout the season. The generally strong counts experienced so far this season have been largely due to their outstanding efforts! For eight hours every day they have been consistently scanning the skies for distant, migrant raptors! We wish to express our profound appreciation for their persistent, focused work for the past 7+ weeks!

With only 15 days left for the 2024 Bridger Raptor Migration Count, now is a great opportunity to assess this season's numbers, based on 33 consecutive seasons of counts. Let's start with the good news!

Here are a few of the highlights of the season as of October 16th:

- **Total raptor count** - 2,583 migrant raptors of 17 species
- **Record high counts** have been tallied for both Broad-winged Hawks (211) and Cooper's Hawks (586)
- **Third highest count ever** recorded for American Kestrel (154)
- **Above-average counts** for Turkey Vulture (40), Osprey (18), Northern Harrier (86), Sharp-shinned Hawk (441), Red-tailed Hawk (204) and Merlin (27).

Perhaps the single most surprising result of the 2024 season was the unprecedented count of Broad-winged Hawks totaling 211. The previous season high for this species was 81, recorded one year ago. The long-term average for this species for the previous 32 years was 18. What might have caused this incredible explosion of Broad-winged Hawks?

The breeding range and habitat preference of this species is primarily North America's eastern forests. However, a small portion of their range extends into northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories of western Canada. These birds generally migrate in a southeastern direction, moving primarily through the Mississippi, Appalachian and Atlantic flyways on their way to winter ranges in Central and South America. Are the widespread wildfires (as a result of the Climate Crisis) in western Canada causing the birds to search for new breeding habitats farther west? Perhaps. Future studies of this species' breeding range and migratory habits are needed to answer this question.

Second year Bald Eagle. Photo: Rosemary D'Andrea

Sacajawea Audubon Society enjoyed another great weekend of public educational efforts at the annual **Bridger RaptorFest** on October 5th & 6th. In addition to the variety of activities at Bridger Bowl, public visitation at our ridgetop lookout both days was extraordinary, with more than 80 people joining our official counters throughout the weekend. Total daily counts were also good, with 72 raptors of 7 species, including 40 Golden Eagles on Saturday, and 45 raptors

of 9 species on Sunday! The weather was perfect both days, although the air quality could have been better.

Of course, the most important finding of this long-term study has been the **persistent decline in Golden Eagle numbers**. The 2024 count for this species now stands at 626, suggesting that, by the end of October it is unlikely that the Golden Eagle count will reach 1,000 birds. The 32-year average count for this species is 1,260. Hence, it appears that the Golden Eagle population using this Rocky Mountain Front Flyway is continuing to show an ongoing, statistically significant decline. For the past several years the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) has been conducting long-term studies of the Golden Eagle population throughout the western United States. We all look forward to learning more about the likely causes of this decline as these studies continue for several more years.

First year Golden Eagle. Photo: Rosemary D'Andrea

We wish to sincerely thank Sacajawea Audubon Society members for their continued sponsorship and generous annual financial support for the Bridger Raptor Migration Project. We also wish to express our deepest appreciation for additional critical and generous financial support for the 2024 Bridger Raptor Count from Bill Simkins & Erna Smeets, Gina Carolan, Elizabeth Wakeman Henderson Charitable Foundation, Gallatin National Forest, GCC Trident Cement, Lou Ann Harris, Scotty & Carolyn Heppel, Terri Narotzky, Nick Bolgiano, Lila Bishop, Elizabeth Swanson, and many others! We also wish to extend our deepest appreciation to local volunteer observers Paulette Epple, John Parker and several others.

SUPPORT THE BRIDGER MOUNTAIN RAPTOR PROJECT:

ENTER TO WIN ONE OF TWO SEASON SKI PASSES!

Sacajawea Audubon Society's important Bridger Mountain Raptor Project is entering its 33rd year, and your support is more crucial than ever. To ensure the continuation of this vital monitoring program, we're excited to raffle off ***two Bridger Bowl Ski Area Season Passes, valued at $1060 each.***

The data collected from this survey is essential for tracking population trends of Golden Eagles and other raptors, helping to shape conservation efforts. The funds raised from this raffle will cover approximately one-quarter of the project's $20,000 budget.

Tickets are just $10 each, or you can get 6 for $50.

Every ticket you purchase helps to better understand and safeguard the future of these majestic birds. Get your raffle tickets today and support the ongoing work of the Bridger Mountain Raptor Project!

A big thank you to Bridger Bowl Ski Area for their continued support of the Bridger Mountain Raptor Project.

Purchase raffle tickets at SAS program meetings and IAWP Trivia Nights, or request tickets online at: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/Q0pL3HYUgMa_wF7Odow5hg

Sharp-shinned Hawk at Bridger. Photo: Kyle Dudgeon

New Study On Window Strike Mortality

By Lou Ann Harris & Beth Madden

A recent study by the American Bird Conservancy, Fordham University, NYC Bird Alliance, and Stony Brook University, has uncovered new evidence that building collisions are killing significantly more birds than previously estimated. **Well over a billion birds are killed annually just in the United States.** The new research shows that only 40 percent of birds injured in building collisions and brought to rehabilitators survive.

This means that, in addition to all the birds that die instantly after a collision, the waxwing or robin that hits your window and flies off is more likely to die than previously thought. The big picture here is that the loss of more than a billion birds a year in the U.S. is not a sustainable number, and the steep decline in bird populations around the world is a direct result.

Annual Bird Layout of birds collected by volunteers in Toronto, 2021. Photo: FLAP Canada (Fatal Light Awareness Program).

While many of the bird strikes occur on high-rise buildings, about half of the billion bird deaths occur on residential windows, making homeowners a vital part of the solution. Luckily, there are many window treatments that are fairly inexpensive and easy to apply that will allow us to be part of the solution. Exterior window treatments such as Acopian Bird Savers or Feather Friendly deterrent markers have been shown to dramatically decrease bird strikes. For new residential and commercial construction, bird-friendly glass such as *ORNILUX* mikado can be installed.

A related issue is the disorienting effect of artificial light on night-migrating birds. Concentrations of bright light affects a birds' normal flight path, drawing them towards the light, and contributing to collisions. So, reducing artificial light at night can help reduce collisions tremendously. **TIP: Turn off all exterior flood lights at night during migration.**

For more details on bird-friendly window solutions, visit Sacajawea Audubon Society's Bird Safe Window page: https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/project/bird-safe-windows/

Source: American Bird Conservancy

Before and after of a window treated with Feather Friendly Collision Deterrent Marker-Pattern Tape. Taken from the outside looking into the house - note the reflection that so often confuses birds. Photos: Lou Ann Harris

BIRD NOTES

by John Parker

What a mild fall it's been, day after day of sunshine and temperatures pushing record highs deep into October. This weather pattern hasn't been conducive for any large-scale fallout of migrating passerines, with few notable warblers or other songbirds observed in our area.

On his way to work September 12th, Josiah Kiehl spotted a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** across from Glen Lake in north Bozeman. From September 27 till October 12, Dave Benes and Dana Skorupa had a **Lazuli Bunting** visiting their yard in Gallatin Gateway. This latter date is a late record for southwestern Montana. Much earlier in the fall migration on August 21st, Doug Smith and John Parker found a wandering **Brown Thrasher** in the willows bordering Harrison Reservoir. Brown Thrashers are rare anywhere in the western third of Montana, and this sighting represents the first record for Madison County.

Northern Pygmy Owl & chickadee. Photo: Tim Preso

Three weeks later, participants in the Sacajawea Audubon Society field trip to Harrison Reservoir had delightful weather. The twelve people on the trip were treated to great views of many of the 54 bird species seen at the reservoir, including one each of **Marbled Godwit** and **Long-billed Curlew**. Both of these shorebirds have typically left Montana by the first of September.

While on a birding excursion to Ennis Lake on September 28th, Kim Obbink and Vic Fesolowitz found three **Sabine's Gulls** and a **Pacific Loon**. Then on a trip to Cottonwood Reservoir north of Wilsall on October 4th, Vic discovered a **Red Phalarope**. There are fewer than twenty-five records in Montana for this shorebird, which was taken off the state rare bird review list two years ago. This Red Phalarope was also a first record for Park County. These outings provided a nice week of birding, with them finding three species of birds that seldom stray from the ocean.

There were two **Northern Pygmy Owls** seen or heard in this area early in October. While hiking to the Bridger Ridge Hawkwatch site on the morning of October 6th, Tim Preso heard scolding chickadees in the chute just below the top. On further investigation Tim spotted the object of the chickadees' ire…a Northern Pygmy Owl perched on a lichen covered snag. Two days later during the pre-dawn hours, Matt Keefer heard a tooting Northern Pygmy Owl near his east Bozeman home.

A **Lewis's Woodpecker** was discovered by Jason Gregg on September 14th at the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve in east Bozeman. This woodpecker remained at this location for five days, allowing many other people to enjoy seeing this beautiful bird.

We know **Black-billed Magpies** aren't exactly uncommon in the Gallatin Valley, but a magpie with a white tail feather is sure to catch your eye. On September 13th Mike Vivian saw a magpie with a white central tail feather, near the corner of Davis and Cattail Streets in northwest Bozeman. What makes this magpie especially intriguing is that Mike saw a magpie with the exact same pattern of leucism at the same location several years previously. Typically, magpies' life expectancy is around five years, but it's not unusual for them to reach ten years in age. Some even live to fifteen years, with the oldest reaching twenty years. Hopefully, birders in this neighborhood will be on the lookout for this eye-catching bird.

Black-billed Magpie.
Photo: Mike Vivian

It's Time to Renew Your SAS Annual Local Membership for 2025

Renew Today for January- December 2025

Sacajawea Audubon Society (SAS) encourages all 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 Sacajawea Audubon Society (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 wildlife & wildlands in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem of Montana by joining the flock and fly 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 & education projects)
- ❒ Student Membership……$10
(College & High School Students)

Join or Renew for 2025 by filling out the membership form on the following page or join online at https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/for-members

SAS Local Membership gives you many benefits:

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 about birds, wildlife and habitat for people of all ages and abilities.
- Support vital partnerships between other nonprofit environmental groups, citizens and local governments to shape the health of our community.
- Advocate for important environmental issues locally and regionally.
- Participate in the Indreland Audubon Wetland Preserve environmental study area.

Northern Flickers. Photo: Terri Narotzky

SAS Members Enjoy:

- Free Monthly Keynote Speaker Meetings.
- Free *Birding Hotspots of Gallatin Valley, a Guide to Birding Around the Gallatin Valley & Beyond*
- Free monthly member e-newsletter, so you'll always know what's going on. (published 9 times a year),
- Member-only discounts on educational courses, programs and special events.
- Savings on purchases and access to member-only sales.
- Opportunities to meet new people and become part of a friendly group that shares an interest in birds, wildlife, the environment, and conservation.
- Participation in many citizen science projects.
- Free guided birding field trips.

Sacajawea Audubon Society's Local Chapter membership does not include membership in the National Audubon Society. We are an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization (EIN 816012429) 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, 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 National Audubon Society** for only $20 more (join online https://sacajaweaaudubon.org/give).

We hope that you will join today, as we approach our 58th 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,

Sacajawea Audubon Society's Board of Directors

Outside Bozeman Radio

In Episode 3 of O/B Radio, host Leslie Gaines sat down with professor of wildlife science and author, John Marzluff, and former YNP wildlife biologist and author, Doug Smith.

The three discuss the reintroduction of wolves, the behavioral patterns of ravens and crows, societal and climate patterns affecting bird populations, and the relationships that unfold between birds and wolves, among other interesting topics.

O/B Radio is available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

O/B: https://outsidebozeman.com/ob-radio

Spotify: https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/outside-bozeman/episodes/John-Marzluff-and-Doug-Smith-on-Ravens--Crows--Wolves-e2lhhmk/a-abdd4om

Apple Music: https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/john-marzluff-and-doug-smith-on-ravens-crows-wolves/id1742015573?i=1000660830885

Path Less Taken: Trip to Costa Rica

February 8-22, 2025

Bird the less-visited parts of Costa Rica on this all-inclusive two-week journey!

Explore the diverse ecosystems of Costa Rica and discover a world of birding opportunities. Immerse yourself in the local culture and learn about conservation efforts from community leaders. Experience Costa Rica like never before on this unforgettable journey.

Cost: $4,700, all-inclusive – Includes a pelagic birding trip
A portion of your trip cost goes to support SAS

For more information and to book your trip visit: roamingnaturalists.com, COSTA RICA 2025 | Small Group Travel with Roaming Naturalists

SACAJAWEA AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Individual or Family | January – December 2025

- ❒ **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 the 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! include 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! November '24 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

A male leucistic Red-winged Blackbird. Photo: Tom Murphey

❄

Sacajawea Audubon Society's

Special Holiday Program

A Look at the Adaptive Wisdom of Birds

Photographs by Tom Murphy

December 9, 2024
at the Emerson!

NOTE THE CHANGE OF VENUE!

6:00 PM – Doors open.

7:00 PM – Program begins.

This will also be your last opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win one of two Bridger Bowl Ski passes. The two winners will be drawn at the end of the program.